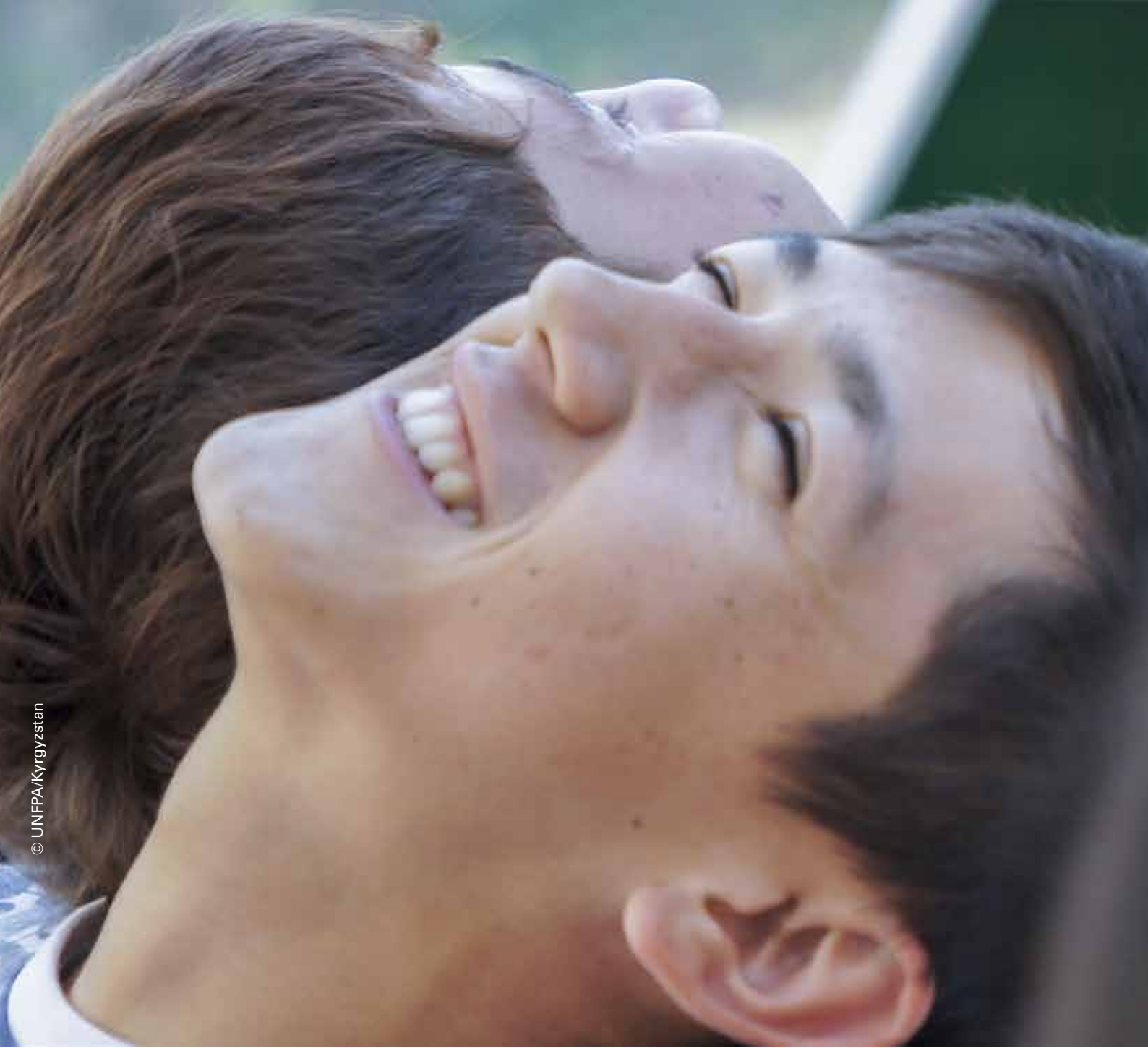


# FINAL REPORT

Evaluation of UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP project  
“Promoting Kyrgyzstan’s youth cohesion  
and interaction towards Uzbekistan”  
(2019-2020)



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## **Final report**

March 2021

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For further information, please contact:

United Nations Children's Fund

Chui Avenue 160, 720040

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

[bishkek@unicef.org](mailto:bishkek@unicef.org)

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## ACRONYMS

CRM	Child Rights Monitoring
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EQ	Evaluation question
EU	European Union
GoK	Government of Kyrgyzstan
HIS	Human interest stories
IP	Implementing Partner
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
KII	Key Informant Interview
KR	Kyrgyz Republic
LIA	Leadership and Innovation Academy
LSG	Local Self-Government
MDG	United Nations Millennium Development Goals
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
PBF	UN Peacebuilding Fund
PBSO	United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office
PDA	Peace and Development Advisor (UNDP)
PPP	UN Peacebuilding Priority Plans 2017-2020 (or 2013-2016 if specified)
PSG	Project Steering Group
PVE	Prevention of violent extremism
RUNOs	Recipient UN Organizations
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNICEF ECARO	United Nations Children’s Fund, Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
YoO	Association “Youth of Osh”
YPI	Youth Promotion Initiative

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the evaluation of the project “Promoting Kyrgyzstan’s Youth Cohesion and Interaction towards Uzbekistan”. The report outlines the evaluation’s background and approach, its findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations. The evaluation was conducted from October 2020 to March 2021.

### OVERVIEW OF INTERVENTION

The fertile Ferghana valley, now split between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, has long crystallized tensions over access to, and share of, natural resources. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the unresolved border delineation has plagued inter-State relations. The areas of Kyrgyzstan which border with Uzbekistan feature communities of varied cultural background, which rely on resources that are spread across disputed borders. They are economically deprived, remote from the country’s capital, and marred by unemployment and labour migration. In these areas, cross-border and domestic conflicts among communities have erupted regularly since the 1990s.

The United Nations Country Office in Kyrgyzstan and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office have conducted conflict analysis, materialized in the Peacebuilding Priority Plans 2013-2016 and 2017-2020. This analysis acknowledges the importance of social cohesion, economic opportunities, civic participation, and the inclusion of all categories especially the youth, towards sustainable peacebuilding in these regions. The analysis further highlights the mutually reinforcing role of inter-State relations on the one hand, and interactions among people on the other hand.

The project “Promoting Kyrgyzstan’s Youth Cohesion and Interaction towards Uzbekistan” echoed this analysis and aimed to support social cohesion in the border areas of Kyrgyzstan, and beyond, nationally. To this end, the project built on the National Youth Agency’s strategic documents, the existing national strategic documents for rapprochement with Uzbekistan, and a favourable diplomatic context, to foster positive interaction of Kyrgyz youth, their communities and relevant public authorities, both within multi-cultural communities in the country, and towards their counterparts in Uzbekistan. This was done through outputs:

1. Young people have improved critical/design thinking and demonstrate support for diversity and equal rights by initiating projects that contribute to the implementation of plans for local development and positive cooperation of youth between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.
2. Parents of young people, community members improve their understanding of diversity, have enhanced knowledge and tools to support and participate in youth-led initiatives.
3. Government representatives have strengthened capacity to provide services in cross-border communities and commit to support youth-driven initiatives aiming at improving the cross-border cooperation.

The project was implemented jointly by UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP in Kyrgyzstan, from January 2019 to November 2020 for a total budget of 1.5 million USD. The Peacebuilding Fund financed this entire budget, as the project was closely based on the conflict analysis conducted by the United Nations Country Office and the Peacebuilding Fund and corresponded to the Fund’s guidance and Peacebuilding Priorities.

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The project consisted of a series of small-scale local initiatives mobilizing tried and tested youth empowerment tools such as the UPSHIFT and LIA programmes, focused respectively on youth participation and on youth leadership through capacity building, mentoring and engagement; legal aid initiatives involving youth in local communities; mini-grants supporting local projects led by the youth; support to access to local services including one-stop-shop in local administration; capacity building for a variety of duty bearers in the border areas; and a series of cross-border events involving the youth and the representatives of national and local administration.

With these activities, the project engaged the youth (from 14 to 28 years old) in the border areas of Kyrgyzstan, their parents and teachers, local communities, as well as local and national duty bearers at central, province and municipal levels. The project selected seven implementing partners, including six civil society organisations and one company, who conducted the bulk of these activities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from early 2020, the project activities moved online. All activities took place on the territory of Kyrgyzstan, with a focus on the provinces of Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad, which border with Uzbekistan.

## EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND INTENDED AUDIENCE

The purpose of the evaluation is to inform the evaluation users for evidence-based decision making on peacebuilding interventions in Kyrgyzstan, based on the learnings from the project “Promoting Kyrgyzstan Youth’s Cohesion and Interaction towards Uzbekistan”.

The evaluation objectives are as follows:

- Understand the effects of the project on the immediate, and when possible, final beneficiaries;
- Ensure accountability towards the donor, the UN governance bodies, strategic goals and UN system values, and towards the beneficiaries (rights holders and duty bearers) in light of the project’s objectives, indicators and targets, and with regard to invested assets;
- Provide opportunities for organizational learning;
- Inform decision-making about the project’s follow-up with regards to youth and peacebuilding.

The primary intended users of the evaluation results are:

- the decision-makers from the government,
- implementing partners,
- implementing agencies UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, and the Peacebuilding Fund.

The secondary intended users are:

- local self-government staff in project communities, and
- project beneficiaries.

Finally, the evaluation report may be of interest to the public at large, including inhabitants of Kyrgyzstan, academics worldwide, and any actor interested in peacebuilding intervention designs.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation is mostly summative (as relates to understanding the effects of the projects and ensuring accountability), but also to some extent formative (as relates to



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organisational learning and informed decision making). The evaluation followed a theory of change-based methodology:

- The evaluation first examines the chain of changes which the project intended to elicit, and the assumptions which the project relied upon for the realization of these changes: this constitutes the theory of change of the project;
- Then, the evaluation determines what changes actually happened for the project beneficiaries and stakeholders. It compares these with the initial theory of change, and checks whether the assumptions of the project were realized;
- Finally, the evaluation analyses the actual contribution of the project to these changes, with the understanding that other factors have likely played a role in these changes.

In order to draw findings on these three points, the evaluation team collected data from complementary sources, including:

- A broad range of documents, both internal (such as project reports, proceeds of project events, strategic documents and standards of the United Nations) to the project and online (such as academic research, as well as reports and strategic documents of public authorities and civil society organisations);
- Over 100 semi-structured interviews with project stakeholders representing varied points of view, including United Nations officials, implementing partners, duty bearers at national, province and local level, young participants and their mentors, parents, teachers and other community members;
- Focus groups with implementing partners and United Nations officials;
- Social media analysis on the project itself as well as on cross-border and interethnic relations in the targeted regions.

The evaluation was conducted by a team of three independent consultants – one international and two national, supported by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Child Rights Monitoring Specialist. An Evaluation Reference Group including representatives of implementing partners, of UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP in Kyrgyzstan, and of the Peacebuilding Support Office of the Peacebuilding Fund, oversaw the evaluation process and provided comments and advice at all stages.

## KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The project approach chose the empowerment of the youth and their communities as the key vehicle to elicit positive interactions at grassroots level, leading to improved social cohesion. It assumed that social cohesion, along with improved inter-State relations, were essential to peacebuilding. The project design corresponded to the priorities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Priority Plan and its in-depth and agreed-upon conflict analysis.

The project further sought to match this robust conceptual framework to the local realities, particularly the local drivers of conflict. To this end, the project implementers analysed the needs and aspirations of its beneficiaries in a participative manner, which enabled to adequately capture the needs and expectations of the targeted communities: empowerment of the youth through novel interactions and capacity building, participation in local decision making, employability, and creation of social and economic avenues locally. Gender equality and empowerment of women were an integral part of the project approach, because the theory of change, with social cohesion among its core intended impacts, was equity-focused. However, the project did not fully integrate the prominent phenomenon of labour migration, especially among the youth beyond school age. During

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implementation, the project adequately retargeted some activities towards the younger share of its intended beneficiaries, who were more present in the selected provinces.

During the project design phase, and throughout implementation, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP, along with their implementing partners, analysed the nexus between three phenomena: interethnic relations as the pivotal aspect of the conflict; unresolved border issues as a key factor fuelling tensions; and the most urgent and unfulfilled needs expressed by the beneficiaries, which acts as a catalyst of these tensions. Although the beneficiaries themselves did not clearly perceive this nexus, this analysis proved particularly relevant and instrumental to the coherence of the project and its theory of change.

The project further engaged the national authorities, particularly the Youth Agency of Kyrgyzstan who actively contributed to the project's strategic approach. This effort secured commitment and enabled the activities to dovetail on political will. At the same time, the position of Kyrgyzstan's Executive somewhat disregards the prominence of interethnic relations within the country, and the project documents had to find a diplomatic compromise: the documents defined the project as a cross-border initiative complemented with local community support, but concrete activities mostly aimed at interethnic and social cohesion within Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, while the theory of change behind the project was internally coherent, its formal expression in the project documents was incomplete. This situation demanded adjustments throughout implementation, which materialized in the adaptation of the activities and of the project's monitoring framework.

The United Nations agencies made the most of their assets within the country, particularly local offices and their network of CSOs, to reach out to underserved regions with a large panel of activities, within a modest budget. There was a good alignment of strategic objectives between the project and implementing partners. While the conceptual frameworks of the United Nations agencies and the Government were not perfectly aligned, their strategy in terms of target groups and actions to be taken were fully compatible. Federated by a common peacebuilding approach, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP in Kyrgyzstan achieved deep cooperation. They pioneered genuine joint implementation, from procurement to monitoring. They translated the "delivering as one" approach into concrete processes and procedures.

While these took lengthy negotiations and slowed down the first phase of the project, they constitute worthy precedents that now need to be perfected and reproduced. The COVID-19 crisis amplified these delays and created obstacles to the implementation of key activities, leading to a final rush, but UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and their implementing partners proved particularly flexible, committed and creative, and successfully completed the project within a reasonable timeframe and with limited resources. Cross-border activities proved particularly challenging to organise administratively. The project design overlooked valuable synergies with sister projects across the borders of Kyrgyzstan, which could have alleviated these difficulties.

The integration of the local needs and expectation, the robustness of the theory of change, and the ability to adapt project design to the circumstances resulted in a relevant and efficient project met by the overwhelmingly positive perception of stakeholders. What is more, the shift to online activities due to COVID-19-related prevention measures was handled swiftly, presenting constraints but also unexpected opportunities.

There is conclusive evidence that the project effectively resulted in increased youth empowerment. The share of girls who participated is high, and the transformative results of the activities are particularly visible for them. Many participants perceived this project as a passage to adulthood, or a self-revealing experience. This happened because the project activities created unexpected and new experiences for the participants: travel and exposure to high quality training products and venues, new forms of interactions, recognition of the leadership role that the youth can play within their community, as well

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as mutually respectful relations among peers and with local self-governance bodies. The results of the project are therefore very apparent among the direct participants in terms of personal and professional development within their community. Beside teachers and other coaches, the project remarkably engaged the parents of the participants, which proved instrumental to success: they acted as facilitators for the project results to expand beyond the youth and to the rest of the community.

The individual and community-level empowerment efforts of the project were particularly effective, and the youth proved a good catalyst for impact. Youth interaction and initiatives have outlasted the closure of the project, even though their frequency and intensity have diminished. However, there is no guarantee that their broader effects will be sustainable: the most significant changes happened at individual level. This is particularly true of interethnic relations. There is anecdotal evidence of progress: many participants reported new perceptions of their peers across the border or in culturally different communities. Social media and interviews showed that the attitudes of the youth and their immediate social circles towards cultural diversity may have evolved. However, self-censorship is still very prevalent among rights holders and duty bearers alike, which is symptomatic of a latent conflict. To overcome these barriers and address the root causes of the conflict, the United Nations will need to continue addressing both interethnic and cross-border relations – from the national to the community levels.

With its legal aid component and capacity building for local duty bearers, the project further created new local venues for peaceful and effective pressing of claims for access to services, settlement of disputes and recourse mechanisms. Enhanced service delivery in municipalities, as well as enhanced consultation and cooperation with the youth, were well received. Success stories emerged from the project activities where municipalities supported youth initiatives. National level duty bearers and their province-level representations became better connected with the final beneficiaries' aspirations and realities. Youth agencies on both sides of the border increased their cooperation.

However, these components of the project still qualify as pilots: their systematisation would require broader reform strategies. Local self-governance units are supportive of youth-led initiatives and ready to carry on, but they will require continued support from national authorities and from international cooperation partners to sustainably reap the benefits of these experiments. With a wide variety of fields and methods, the project was exploratory: it will require follow up and prioritization.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In order to capitalize on the opportunities created by this project, the peacebuilding fund should continue supporting youth empowerment projects as vehicles for peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan along with neighbouring countries.
2. The peacebuilding fund should consider setting up an online community of practice on peacebuilding projects accessible to its recipients.
3. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and any other relevant agency such as UN Women) should initiate a regional, modular follow up youth empowerment and peacebuilding programme with its peers in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.
4. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should streamline pilot initiatives into systemic, peacebuilding partnerships with key duty bearers.
5. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should introduce gender transformative results to the successor project, based on gender analysis and in consultation or cooperation with UN Women.

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6. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should re-define target age groups of youth empowerment programmes in border areas towards adolescents and very young adults (up to 20 years) in addition to the original target group (up to 28 years), with emphasis on women/girls and vulnerable groups, and tailor activities accordingly.
  7. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should maintain selected activities online beyond the COVID-19 crisis.
  8. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should anticipate and accelerate joint procurement and other administrative processes linked to joint implementation.
  9. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, in particular the State Agency for Regional Development should support the decentralisation efforts of the State Registry Service of Kyrgyzstan and Ombudsperson's office.
  10. The Government of Kyrgyzstan, the Presidential Office, and Ministry of Education should facilitate and support systematic involvement of educational institutions in peacebuilding initiatives and youth empowerment, especially in border areas.
  11. The Government of Kyrgyzstan should consider the creation of a peacebuilding national platform.
  12. Implementing partners should continue to develop their capacity to reach out to remote, vulnerable groups in border areas.



# INTRODUCTION



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of the evaluation of the project “Promoting Kyrgyzstan’s youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan” implemented by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) between 14 November 2018 and 14 November 2020 (hereinafter “the project”). The total budget of the project amounted to 1,500,000 USD, which was provided by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

The purpose of this report is to communicate the finding, conclusions and recommendations based on the theory-of-change-based evaluation of the project. The evaluation was both summative, presenting how the theory of change has operated towards results through the reference period, and formative, demonstrating what dynamics prepare the results to ultimately contribute to long term impact, and how future follow-up activities could be framed. The report delivers lessons learned and recommendations to implementing United Nations agencies, civil society implementing partners, the PBF as well as local and national duty bearers.

The evaluation was commissioned by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, supervised by the UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Child Rights Monitoring Specialist and entrusted to the following evaluation team:

- Ms. Camille Massey, International Consultant/Team Leader
- Ms. Gulnara Asilbekova, National Consultant
- Ms. Aiganysh Isaeva, National Expert
- The evaluation process was accompanied by an Evaluation Reference Group (Annex 14: Terms of Reference of the Evaluation Reference Group) composed of representatives including the various stakeholders.

This report was prepared by the evaluation team composed of one International Consultant, one National Consultant, one National Expert, and reviewed by the National Expert and Child Rights Monitoring Specialist, the Evaluation Reference Group members, UNICEF ECARO Evaluation Specialist, and a representative of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office.

The evaluation process followed three phases:

- Inception: review of documentation, elaboration of the methodology, identification of stakeholders, interviews with key resource persons, consultation with the Reference Group, Inception Report.
- Data collection and field work: remote data collection through interviews (over 100 interviewees), focus groups (14 participants), social media review, consultation with the Reference Group in respect to preliminary findings;
- Data analysis and reporting: analysis of interview and focus group notes, analysis of social media data, analysis of documentation, report drafting, remote consultation with Reference Group and UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, as well as UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office and United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) Headquarters, and finalisation of the Evaluation Report.

The evaluation process started on 16 October 2020. It should end 15 March 2021 as per timeline.

The evaluation process had to adjust to the aftermath of the parliamentary elections of 4 October 2020, which elicited high turnaround among national and province stakeholders, and to the COVID-19. However, the timing of remote field research was held; the interviews, focus groups, consultations with the Evaluation Reference Group and the implementing United Nations organisations in Kyrgyzstan as well as the validation of recommendations were done remotely, as per standard COVID-19 prevention measures.



# BACKGROUND



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## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Context and Conflict Analysis

#### 2.2.1. The Kyrgyz-Uzbek Border

The border contradictions in post-Soviet Central Asian countries remain complex and unsettled. The Fergana Valley is in the centre of tensions involving three neighbouring countries: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The Kyrgyz-Uzbek border disputes date back to the 1920s when the first boundaries were drawn by the Soviet Union. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were separated through internal administrative boundaries within a single country. Both republics had access to shared natural resources such as water and pastures. They ran economic links and shared a network of roads with free movement of people and goods. These boundaries were altered on numerous occasions based on the economic necessities of local economic entities. The republics were permitted to secure long-term leases of territory from other republics, which created enclaves – isolated islands of territories within another republic.

In 1991, with the independence of the former Soviet republics, the borders became international, and an unsettled dispute between the two countries remained. Enclaves persisted, but they were not properly documented, which became the subject of political manipulation and public discussions both at internal political and foreign policy levels of both countries. As of 2019, about 92 percent of the 1,378-kilometer-long Kyrgyz-Uzbek border has been delineated, leaving disputed territories and 110 km of unresolved border. The enclaved communities, who depend on economic and social ties outside their enclaves, have suffered from existing border regimes and disputes.

For many years there had been a lack of constructive dialogue and diplomacy to address the border disputes. As a result, tensions had become an every-day routine between the neighbours. There was a major breakthrough after the new President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev came to office in September 2016, and bilateral relations began to improve. Yet, border-related conflicts between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have kept erupting on a regular basis at local level over the natural resources, such as access to water and arable land. The most recent conflict flared up on 31 May 2020 at the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border between the inhabitants of the Uzbek enclave Sokh and of nearby Chechme village of Kadamjay region (Kyrgyzstan).<sup>1</sup> 25 people from the Kyrgyz side were injured, 1 person died later in hospital. From the Uzbek side, 187 people were injured.

Conflict is the result of a disagreement between actors based perceived incompatible goals.<sup>2</sup> Conflict is characterized as a natural component of societal interactions, where differences in interests and opinions between groups are to be expected. Disagreements often occur between individuals or groups in relation to the distribution of scarce resources, dissimilar perception of values and access to power. Disagreements can turn into violent conflict when “there are inadequate channels for dialogue and disagreement”; when “dissenting voices and deeply held grievances cannot be heard and addressed”; and in environments

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<sup>1</sup> Part of the Kyrgyz territories bordering Uzbekistan are irrigated with water from canals in Sokh. There are tensions about water allocation of the Chechme spring, which supplies water to the Kyrgyz village of Chechme (population of approx. 1,000 people) and Uzbek Chashma (of more than 17,000 people). The conflict arose around a water spring which inhabitants from both sides had been cleaning. See: Larionov, Konstantin, Why Kyrgyzstan Won't Gain from the Protracted Border Dispute with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan?, Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, <<https://cabar.asia/en/why-kyrgyzstan-won-t-gain-from-the-protracted-border-dispute-with-tajikistan-and-uzbekistan>>, 17.11.2020 [27/01/2021]

<sup>2</sup> Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, How to Guide to Conflict Sensitivity, London: The Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012, p. 2.



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of “instability, injustice and fear”<sup>3</sup> In Kyrgyzstan, interethnic tensions are not the main fault line at the national level: they arise as a result (rather than as a driver) of local conflicts. The sources of local conflict are often identified as weak governance, high unemployment especially among young people, and criminalization of the economy.<sup>4</sup> Academic research refers to the lack of justice as a frequent implicit or explicit issue when dwellers of border villages discuss their problems.<sup>5</sup> Criminalisation of the economy and unemployment of young people are especially characteristic of the South of Kyrgyzstan, especially Osh province,<sup>6</sup> in context of the incomplete processes of demarcation and delimitation of the state boundaries which significantly affects economic stakes.<sup>7</sup>

Inter-State confrontation over borders then exacerbates conflict at the local level on both sides of the border. It intensifies disputes over natural resources, hinders the free flow of people and goods, thus negatively impacting economic growth. Conflicts bring disruption to communities, while destabilizing relationships and impeding access to resources. Conflicts disrupt livelihoods, placing even greater burden on the most vulnerable. In addition, conflicts at the local level contribute to a sense of insecurity and weaken the legitimacy of institutions that have failed to fairly resolve conflicts and to protect the people. This process becomes a vicious circle of declining trust in government and escalating insecurity.

## 2.2.2. Young people in peacebuilding

The role of youth in the 2010 clashes is widely recognised, both as actors and victims. Conflict analysis identifies peacebuilding, human development, democratisation, governance and institution-building as building blocks in the development and transformation of the Kyrgyz society, necessary for the stabilisation of the peace process in a post-conflict situation. Youth vulnerability to violent radicalisation is addressed by national and international stakeholders alike, and so is their potential to contribute to peacebuilding. Search for Common Ground identifies four key drivers of radicalization.<sup>8</sup> These are 1) challenges of identity and belonging, 2) a weakening of the social fabric, 3) the absence of platforms where youth can voice and address their grievances, and 4) exclusion from decision-making processes. In Southern Kyrgyzstan, interethnic tensions must be addressed on top of the issues relevant to youth in Kyrgyzstan in general, as events have shown that the security situation along the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border can be volatile.

Targeting youth as peacebuilding actors in southern Kyrgyzstan has therefore been a wide-spread approach in the past few years, as well as addressing their grievances and supporting their participation in democratic processes. This rationale which links both approaches (youth as actors of peace on the one hand, and needs and aspirations of youth

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert, S. Conflict analysis: Topic guide. Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2017 <[www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund/documents/investments](http://www.un.org/peacebuilding/fund/documents/investments)> [10/10/2020].

<sup>4</sup> See conflict analysis in the UN Peacebuilding Priority Plan Kyrgyzstan (2017-2020), <<https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/en/31253-peacebuilding-priority-plan-ppp>> [13/10/2020].

<sup>5</sup> Murzakulova, Asel, Contextual Factors of conflict in Border Communities in Batken Province, Kyrgyzstan, Technical Report, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.24353.024, September 2017 <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320014772\\_Contextual\\_Factors\\_of\\_conflict\\_in\\_Border\\_Communities\\_in\\_Batken\\_Province\\_Kyrgyzstan](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320014772_Contextual_Factors_of_conflict_in_Border_Communities_in_Batken_Province_Kyrgyzstan)> [12/12/2020]; also mentioned in Murzakulova, Asel, Gulbara Omorova and Evgenii Shibkov, Reconsidering the meaning of neighbourhood: the transformation of Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan border areas after 2016, MSRI Brief, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.19225.98406, May 2019 <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335161251\\_Reconsidering\\_the\\_meaning\\_of\\_neighbourship\\_the\\_transformation\\_of\\_Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan\\_border\\_areas\\_after\\_2016](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335161251_Reconsidering_the_meaning_of_neighbourship_the_transformation_of_Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan_border_areas_after_2016)> [12/12/2020].

<sup>6</sup> Murzakulova, Asel, Rural Migration in Kyrgyzstan: Drivers, Impact and Governance, University of Central Asia, MSRI Research paper # 7, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.35258.21442, June 2020, <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344362648\\_Rural\\_Migration\\_in\\_Kyrgyzstan\\_Drivers\\_Impact\\_and\\_Governance](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344362648_Rural_Migration_in_Kyrgyzstan_Drivers_Impact_and_Governance)> [12/12/2020].

<sup>7</sup> Larionov, Konstantin, Why Kyrgyzstan Won't Gain from the Protracted Border Dispute with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan?, Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting, <<https://cabar.asia/en/why-kyrgyzstan-won-t-gain-from-the-protracted-border-dispute-with-tajikistan-and-uzbekistan>>, 17.11.2020 [27/01/2021].

<sup>8</sup> Dhungana, Shiva K, Rahat Ismanbaeva and Aizharkyn Aisakhunova / Search for Common Ground Kyrgyzstan, Reducing Violent Religious Extremism and Preventing Conflict in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia 2013-2016, April 2016, <[www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CSSF\\_KGZ501-Review\\_Final\\_Report\\_13052016.pdf](http://www.sfcg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/CSSF_KGZ501-Review_Final_Report_13052016.pdf)>; See also Search for Common Ground, #JashStan: Youth as agents of peace and stability in Kyrgyzstan, <[www.sfcg.org/jashstan-youth-as-agents-of-peace-and-stability-in-kyrgyzstan/](http://www.sfcg.org/jashstan-youth-as-agents-of-peace-and-stability-in-kyrgyzstan/)> [27/01/2021].

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regarding their agency and educational, social, economic perspectives on the other), underlies the theory of change of the project.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.2.3. National Policies and Legislation in Kyrgyzstan

The project document identified the following key national strategic documents that commit to creating positive peaceful experiences with the Uzbek counterparts and among communities.

The National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic 2018-2040, endorsed in November 2018, frames the vision for the development of the country. This Strategy focuses on four areas: Human being - family - society, Economic well-being and quality of environment for development, Public administration, and Development management. The National Development Programme 2018-2022 “Unity, Trust, Creation” serves as its medium-term implementation plan. It incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aims to improve the quality of citizens’ life through sustainable economic growth.

A joint action plan with the Uzbek government for 2017-2019 (signed by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on 5 September 2017) frames economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation between the two governments, including local self-governments and local state administrations. Each of the three southern provinces of Kyrgyzstan bordering with Uzbekistan developed their own action plans of cooperation with their peer province on the other side, e.g. for 2016-2018 between Batken province and Fergana provinces in Uzbekistan. These plans capture the following spheres: trade and economy, agro-industry, education, sports, youth policy healthcare, tourism and culture. The plans are very broad: for example, on youth policy, the envisaged action is “to carry out cooperation in the priority areas of the youth policy”.

The State Agency for Youth and Sports of Kyrgyzstan signed a Memorandum of Understanding with its counterpart in Uzbekistan, which foresees cooperation for youth activities and events in cultural and educational areas

## 2.2 The Youth-Promotion Initiative Project in Support of Peacebuilding on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek Border

The project “Promoting Kyrgyzstan’s youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan” was initiated in 2018 by UNICEF, UNDP, and UNFPA in response to the call for proposals for the United Nations’ Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative,<sup>10</sup> which supports the empowerment of women<sup>11</sup> and young people to ensure their inclusion and participation in peacebuilding and decision-making processes at all levels. The intervention was planned for 18 months, starting on 14 November 2018, and was extended for five months until November 14, 2020. The total budget of the project was \$ 1,500,000.<sup>12</sup>

The overall purpose of the project is to improve social cohesion in border areas, and beyond across the entire country.<sup>13</sup> Based on this purpose, the project included one outcome: “Kyrgyz youth and relevant government agencies collaborate and further

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<sup>9</sup> See for example: Tricot O’Farrell, Kloé, Kanat Abdiev and Alastair Carr / Saferworld / Foundation for Tolerance International, Young people’s voices on peace and security in Kyrgyzstan, August 2019, <<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1219-young-peoples-voices-on-peace-and-security-in-kyrgyzstan>> [12/12/2020].

<sup>10</sup> <[www.pbfgyipi.org](http://www.pbfgyipi.org)> [27/01/2021].

<sup>11</sup> Project document: “As noted by the peacebuilding priority plan and supporting researches the representation gap and marginalization of youth and in particular women is one of the most critical elements creating triggers for unrest especially if exacerbated by ethnic divisions.”

<sup>12</sup> Project document, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Project document, p. 2.

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develop cooperation plans to improve positive interactions with their Uzbek counterparts," served by three outputs as formulated in the project documents:

1. Young people have improved critical/design thinking and demonstrate support for diversity and equal rights by initiating projects that contribute to the implementation of plans for local development and positive cooperation of youth between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.
2. Parents of young people, community members improve their understanding of diversity, have enhanced knowledge and tools to support and participate in youth-led initiatives.
3. Government representatives have strengthened capacity to provide services in cross-border communities and commit to support youth-driven initiatives aiming at improving the cross-border cooperation.

All project activities took place on the territory of Kyrgyzstan with some activities involving youth and authorities from Uzbekistan. Activities were conducted at central government level, and locally along the Southern Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, in the provinces of Osh (Kara-Suu, Kashkar-Kyshtak, Tepe-Korgon), Jalalabad (Kerben, Kashka-Suu, Kok-Serek) and Batken (Aidarken, Birlik, Suu-Bashy).

The project assumes that youth empowerment and peacebuilding are mutually reinforcing, in line with UN Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018). The focus on youth also acknowledges that youth is at risk of being both perpetrators and victims of conflict,<sup>14</sup> as observed during the events of 2010.

Conflict is also a recurrent concern for UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP in terms of children's, youth's and vulnerable populations' equitable access to their rights. The project therefore targeted immediate (youth, central and local self-governance authorities and service providers) and final beneficiaries (communities in border areas of Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan).<sup>15</sup> It became the first and the only Youth Promotion Initiative project in Kyrgyzstan which was implemented by Recipient United Nations Organizations (RUNOs), while other Youth Promotion Initiative projects in the country have been implemented by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).<sup>16</sup>

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan was the lead agency for the coordination of the project and organized the process of joint planning of the project as well as joint monitoring and reporting. UNICEF organized systematic coordination meetings with participation of the RUNOs as well as Implementing Partners (IPs) of the project. Together with UNDP, UNICEF brought the experience of a similar and recent PBF-funded project at the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. UNFPA mobilised expertise on inclusion, with particular attention to women and young people.

The division of activities between the implementing UN agencies was set in the project document, with UNICEF as the lead Agency. Both UNICEF and UNFPA implemented Small Grant Facilities, UNICEF through UPSHIFT (including mentorship), UNFPA through the Leadership Innovation Academy, both with a mentorship component. UNFPA conducted informational activities on social allowances with right holders. UNDP supported activities empowering youth and supporting youth-to-youth legal aid solutions, initiatives on the critical/design thinking, research storytelling, Consensus case – debate tournament, peace Media Lab contributing to youth interaction. UNDP worked in the field of legal aid, in particular with the Association of Legal Clinics, and capacity building for local service providers (one-stop-shop approach), justice, rule of law and ombudsman institutions (Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken branches), State Registry Service under the Government

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<sup>14</sup> Ali Altiok / Irena Grizelj, *We Are Here: An Integrated Approach to Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes*, UN Global Policy Paper on Youth Participation in Peace Processes, April 2019, p. 9, 21, and key messages 3 and 5, p. 35 and 36.

<sup>15</sup> See further below in the Stakeholders section of this report and in Annex 2, Stakeholder Analysis.

<sup>16</sup> Terms of Reference, p. 2.

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of the Kyrgyz Republic and strengthened the complaint mechanism to enhance young women's and men's access to services, justice and to increase trust.

The project delegated the output on youth empowerment to six implementing CSOs and one private company selected through a competitive process:

- Public Association "Youth of Osh"
- Accelerate Prosperity
- PF "International Debate Education Association in Central Asia" (IDEA CA)
- Association of legal clinics of Kyrgyzstan
- Public Fund "Tvoe pravo"
- "Women's Peace Bank" PF
- John Galt Venture Capital & Private Equity (private company)

## 2.3 Theory of Change

### Theory of change-based evaluation

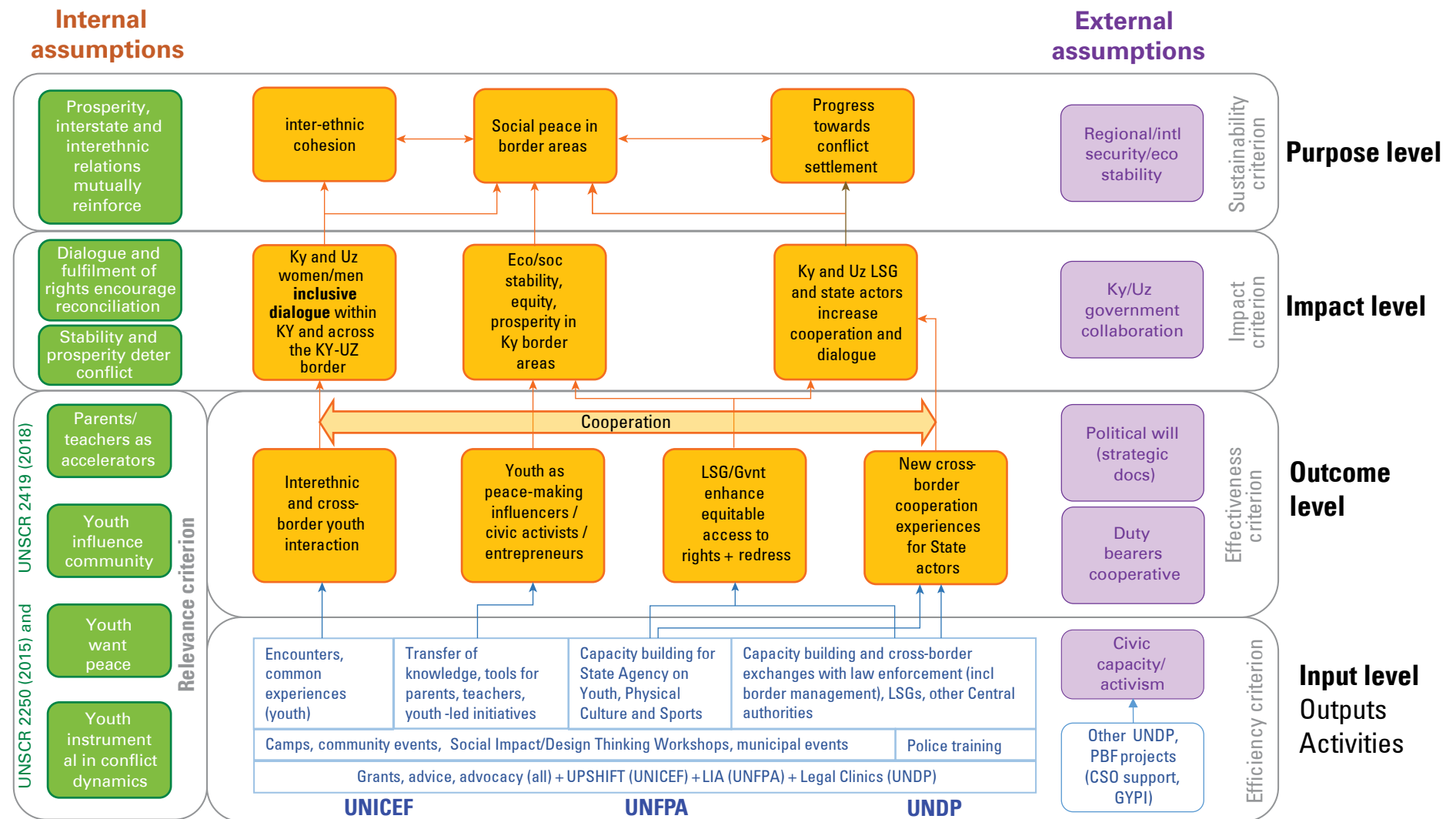
A theory of change-based evaluation tests the validity of the theory of change of the intervention against implementation. At each level of the theory of change, the evaluation first determines whether the envisaged change took place and whether assumptions were realized. Then, it analyses the plausibility and, wherever possible, the extent of the project's contribution to these changes (contribution analysis).

To answer key evaluation questions, the evaluation therefore examined the input and result and level of the intervention: how the theory of change has operated towards results during the implementation of the project (summative). It also examined the impact and purpose levels of the theory of change: what dynamics are likely to contribute to long term impact, and how follow-up activities could support this impact (formative).

Theory of change of the project's action in support of peace building on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border

In the project document, the theory of change of the project is formulated as such: If Kyrgyzstani young women and men and the local governance institutions build inclusive dialogue and cooperation with their counterparts across the Uzbek border and if grass-roots positive cross-border interactions amass, supporting and expanding the on-going inter-governmental collaboration efforts, then interethnic cohesion improves within the border areas and beyond, because the more positive interactions there will be the less the perception of "the other" among the different groups will exist. For the evaluation, the theory of change was further elaborated to distinguish the various levels of change, associate internal and external assumptions to each level of change, and link the key project components to this chain of changes. The theory of change was then visualised, discussed and validated with the project team during the inception phase.

**Figure 1:** Visual reconstruction of the theory of change



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**At input level** (what the project did, which was directly within its control), the project implemented a set of activities: Camps, community events, Social Impact/Design Thinking Workshops, activities carried out at local level in partnership with local government. These activities come from the assumption that youth are best empowered with the support and responses from qualified counterparts. They were designed to create new experiences, tools, knowledge and skills among direct beneficiaries, particularly the youth themselves, as well as their immediate circle (parents, teachers, community members). They were complemented by capacity-building activities with the Youth State Agency at national and local levels, municipal administration (e.g. “youth specialists” in each municipality, social workers). The activities are grouped by the project documents under the three outputs, which the theory of change encapsulates as common experiences, transfer of knowledge and tools and capacity building for national and local duty bearers respectively.

For this, the project mobilised the financial resources, political and social capital, knowledge and skills of the three UN agencies and their implementing partners, channelled into a set of mechanisms: Grants, advice, advocacy, the UPSHIFT programme, Leadership and Innovation Academy, Consensus Youth Case – Debate tournament, Creative contest “Janyration Chakrygy”, Peace MediaLab, Youth-to-Youth Legal Aid.

The direct beneficiaries were identified according to the assumptions that (a) youth are often instrumentalised in conflict, particularly its interethnic aspects, but conversely can be instrumental in resolving and preventing ethnic conflict if they are empowered, because (b) they essentially aspire to peace; (c) other projects contributed to a sufficient level of civic activism in the regions concerned, backed by a willingness to cooperate from the part of the duty bearers (local self-governance bodies, law enforcement agencies, justice system), all providing a conducive environment to the empowerment of the youth and a fluid transition towards the result level.

**At outcome level** (the intermediary level between input and impact, describing the changes happening as a direct result of the project but not within the control of the project implementers) these actions were supposed to elicit changes in the interaction, capacities, attitudes and actions of the direct beneficiaries (provided the assumptions of the input level were realized).

These changes encompass both the outputs and outcomes in the taxonomy of the project document. The project document describes the outputs of the project as follows: “Young people have improved critical/design thinking and demonstrate support for diversity and equal rights by initiating projects that contribute to the implementation of plans for local development and positive cooperation of youth between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan”, “parents of young people, community members improve their understanding of diversity, have enhanced knowledge and tools to support and participate in youth-led initiatives”, and “Government representatives have strengthened capacity to provide services in cross-border communities and commit to support youth-driven initiatives aiming at improving the cross-border cooperation”<sup>17</sup>

An online workshop with the project team enabled the evaluation team to unpack these outputs and identify key assumptions at this level. The outputs (or immediate results) of the project can be formulated and linked to assumptions as follows:

- If youth essentially aspire to peace (assumption (b) above), then the experiences accumulated through the project should lead them to initiate positive interethnic and cross-border interactions;
- If the youth can be instrumental to positive dynamics in the conflict (assumption (a) above), then they should become influencers, activists and entrepreneurs who contribute to peaceful relationships between communities;

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<sup>17</sup> PBF project document, pp. 24, 25 and 26.



- If there is a strong level of civic activism supported by other complementary projects (assumption (c) above), then the capacity-building activities and the involvement of the youth should lead to enhanced access to rights by the rights holders (including through redress mechanisms) in the targeted communities, and to more equitable access to these rights;
- If, in addition, these assumptions are fulfilled, the facilitation and capacity-building activities carried out by the project should also cause them to experiment with new cross-border cooperation initiatives, because they would be encouraged by positive dynamics observed.

These four outcomes were expected to culminate into self-generated, cross-cutting cooperative initiatives between the youth of both ethnicities, the duty bearers at local and national level, and the duty bearers across the border with Uzbekistan: the project document defines the intended project outcome as follows: “Kyrgyz youth and relevant government agencies collaborate and further develop cooperation plans to improve positive interactions with their Uzbek counterparts.” This transformation from grass-root experiments to lasting and cross-cutting cooperation supposes that the duty bearers at local and national level are ready, willing and able to cooperate (assumption (d)).

At impact level (broader changes to which the project contributes, through the changes that occur at the result level), the project document expects that “interethnic cohesion improves within the border areas and beyond”. The online workshop with the project team decomposed this idea into three expected impacts:

- Kyrgyz and Uzbek women and men engage in an inclusive dialogue, both between ethnic groups within Kyrgyzstan, and across the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border. This supposes a transition from youth-centred and youth-led dialogue initiatives to community-wide dialogue, in which the transmission belt lays with the parents and teachers who are the interface between the youth and the rest of the community. In particular, parents are assumed to be accelerators of their children’s new capacities and attitudes, provided they feel consulted and included (assumption (e));
- Economic and social stability, equity and prosperity in Kyrgyz border areas will be strengthened as a direct effect of better access to rights and entrepreneurial initiatives led by the youth;
- Cooperation and dialogue between Kyrgyz and Uzbek local self-government and central level actors increases. This supposes that the cross-border cooperation experiments transform into more systemic patterns, because they are supported by political will at all levels (embodied by strategic policy documents) (assumption (f)).

These impacts should in turn contribute to the bigger purpose of peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan and in the region, broken down into three main categories:

- Interethnic cohesion, because people who are engaged in a peaceful dialogue and who can access and claim their rights have no reason to cultivate rejection and conflict (assumption (g)), otherwise formulated by the project document as a reduction of “the perception of ‘the other’ among the different groups”<sup>18</sup> through the catalytic effect of positive interactions;
- Social peace in border areas, based on the assumption that a stable, prosperous society is not prone to internal conflicts or to seeking external enemies to conflict with (assumption (h));
- Progress towards interstate conflict settlement at a diplomatic level. The idea is that the changes at impact level are likely to reinforce the recent and dynamic Kyrgyz-Uzbek government collaboration (assumption (i)), as seen in the Joint action plan 2017-2019, the Memorandum of Understanding between the State Agency for Youth and Sport and its Uzbek counterpart, and the respective province action plan of cooperation.

<sup>18</sup> PBF project document, ToC p. 11.

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The changes at impact level are further supposed to create a virtuous circle of peacebuilding, thanks to the converging actions of empowered communities, State, local governance bodies and civic actors. The project's vision of peacebuilding as a virtuous circle supposes that the aspirations of these stakeholders are indeed convergent, in other words, that prosperity, (positive) interstate and (positive) interethnic relations mutually reinforce for an enduring peace. This virtuous circle also relies on the absence of disruptive factors at international and regional level: international and regional security and economic stability constitute the last assumption (assumption (j)).

## 2.4 Stakeholders

The present project evaluation recognised the different groups of stakeholders and places specific attention to (a) the benefits received by the stakeholder groups (b) the level of participation by the different stakeholders and (c) the communication between the project and its stakeholders (cf. Annex 2, Stakeholder Analysis).

The project was funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and implemented by three Recipient UN Organizations in Kyrgyzstan: UNICEF as a leading agency, together with UNDP and UNFPA.

**At the national level**, the main project partner was the State Agency for Youth and Sports of Kyrgyzstan. It worked with its Uzbek counterpart, the State Agency for Youth of Uzbekistan<sup>19</sup> (officially established in August 2020), and the "Youth Unity of Uzbekistan", who were project partners. The National State Registry Service and the Ombudsperson's institution were actively involved in the project: central offices and in each target rayon (district) and in Osh city. The Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were regularly informed about the project development process and consulted, as was the relevant office of the Presidential Administration. In addition, the State Agency for Local Self Governance and interethnic relations, provincial authorities of Osh, Batken and Jalalabad, as well as youth representatives were consulted for the project design.

**On municipal and district level**, representatives involved with youth issues were main project partners, as well as village councils and mayors' offices were beneficiaries and central actors within the project. Law enforcement bodies, community service centres/LSGs (for free consultative legal aid) and the State Agency for Youth and Sports (Provincial Departments) received capacity building within the framework of the project.

**Implementing partners** were the following CSOs: Public Association "Youth of Osh"; Accelerate Prosperity, "International Debate Education Association in Central Asia" (IDEA CA), Association of legal clinics of Kyrgyzstan, Public Fund "Tvoe pravo" and "Women's Peace Bank" PF. The private company John Galt VC was also an implementing partner. Law students participated in the internships based on the tripartite memorandums between LSGs, Universities and the Association of legal clinics, supported by the UNPD. Young students provided primary free legal aid and information about public services in the target communities.

**Final beneficiaries** were young people who have participated in project activities, but also their parents, teachers, mentors, community members in the municipalities targeted by the project, and ultimately all community members of the targeted locations. In total 2785 young people took part in the project activities (capacity development and practical works) with more than 70% of girls. 110 youth specialists of the State Agency and government (national, local and province level specialists) were trained on youth centred planning and budgeting. 470 parents, teachers and community members were involved in the regular project activities. 142 legal service providers and 57 prosecutor office staff were trained within the project. Additionally, other activities that were conducted by the young people at local level involved many other people.

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<sup>19</sup> <<https://nspi.uz/?portfolio=ozbekiston-yoshlar-ittifoqi-boshlangich-tashkiloti-kengashi&lang=en>> [27/01/2021].



# EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE



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## 3. EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

### 3.1 Purpose and Use of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to inform the evaluation users for evidence-based decision making.

The primary intended users of the evaluation results are:

- the decision-makers from the government,
- implementing partners,
- implementing agencies UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, and the Peacebuilding Fund.

The secondary intended users are:

- local self-government staff in project communities, and
- project beneficiaries.

The evaluation therefore aims to:

- Understand the effects of the project on the immediate, and when possible, final beneficiaries;
- Ensure accountability towards the donor, the UN governance bodies, strategic goals and UN system values, and towards the beneficiaries (rights holders and duty bearers) in light of the project's objectives, indicators and targets, and with regard to invested assets;
- Provide opportunities for organizational learning;
- Inform decision-making about the project's follow-up with regards to youth and peacebuilding.

The evaluation is therefore mostly summative (as relates to understanding the effects of the projects and ensuring accountability), but also to some extent formative (as relates to organisational learning and informed decision making). The evaluation report and management response will be public, thus fulfilling UNICEF's commitment to transparency and accountability.

### 3.2 Objectives of Evaluation

The evaluation objectives, in line with the ToR, and complemented by the evaluation team, are as follows:

1. To assess whether the project has met its objectives, and whether its objectives were relevant to the context.
2. To assess the circumstances influencing the project's achievements and the challenges that hindered it, and generates findings, lessons learned and recommendations regarding the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project results.
3. To measure the result of the project in terms of outcome and outputs it has delivered to target groups and beneficiaries.

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4. To assess the contribution of the project to UN peacebuilding efforts, and conversely the value of peacebuilding as a driving conceptual framework federating the efforts of the UN agencies involved in programming and implementation.

### 3.3 Scope of the Evaluation

**Programmatic scope:** the evaluation covered all project activities of UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP during the period from January 1, 2019 to November 15, 2020. The evaluation covered the input and results levels of the intervention: all implemented activities grouped under “outputs” in the project document, and the expected results from these activities. The evaluation team only ventured to identify plausible impact and sustainability aspects of the project, due to the short timeframe covered.

**Geographic scope:** the evaluation covered activities conducted within the territory of Kyrgyzstan, at central government level, at local self-governance level, and at grassroot level. Owing to the restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, evaluation activities were carried out remotely (online, by phone or in writing).

**Unit of analysis:** in addition to the general project planning and implementation, the evaluation analysed sampled initiatives in four sampled target municipalities in Osh (Kashkar-Kyshtak), Jalalabad (Kok-Serek and Kerben) and Batken (Aidarken) provinces.

**Thematic scope:** the evaluation focused on peacebuilding and youth empowerment as central elements of the project’s theory of change. This thematic scope relates to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) in that it relates to the situation of ethnic minorities often impeded to fully access their rights, and to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) as a cross-cutting issue.

**Population group covered:** the evaluation analysed the effects of the project on both immediate beneficiaries and final beneficiaries. Immediate beneficiaries included:

- As rights holders: youth<sup>20</sup> and their parents, teachers and mentors<sup>21</sup> involved in the activities of the project;
- As duty bearers: local self-governance authorities/services and law enforcement officials at local level, and central government representatives from specialized ministries and agencies.

Final beneficiaries include all community members in the municipalities covered by the project.

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<sup>20</sup> Based on the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On the foundations of state youth policy” (dated 31 July 2009, № 256), youth are citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic and stateless persons aged 14 to 28 years old. The project used this definition when defining the project beneficiaries. Due to migration demographics, the target group’s age range was adapted at the project’s early stages, covering mostly 15-18 year olds.

<sup>21</sup> The mentors interviewed for the evaluation were all teachers at participating schools, except for one who had extensive experience of working with young people and children through local CSOs.



# EVALUATION METHODOLOGY



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## 4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Evaluation Criteria

Based on the OECD/DAC criteria and the list of evaluation questions suggested in the Terms of Reference, the evaluation team streamlined and reformulated the evaluation questions. The evaluation matrix (annex 1) presents the correspondence between evaluation criteria, evaluation questions and sub-questions, indicators, data collection methods and data sources.

#### Relevance

The evaluation examined relevance through the lens of the basic key assumptions of the project: the mutual reinforcement of the various stakeholders' actions in the conflict dynamics backing up the project's theory of change.

*Evaluation question 1: To what extent were the project results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries, especially of young women and men?*

The evaluation first assessed how the project integrated conflict analysis and the understanding of needs and aspirations of stakeholders especially including final beneficiaries (communities of rights holders in particular the youth, duty bearer at local and national level, decision makers in inter-state relations).

*Evaluation question 2: To what extent is the project based on a logical Theory of Change and how coherent was it in practice?*

The evaluation tested the internal coherence of the project, and its coherence with the strategic goals of the UN in Kyrgyzstan in terms of peacebuilding, and the existing peacebuilding framework of the UN as applied to Kyrgyzstan, defined by key documents by the PBF.<sup>22</sup> It further checked how the project handled the evolutions occurring at national and local level, and whether it was adapted over the course of the intervention.

#### Effectiveness

The effectiveness criterion aimed to determine whether and to what extent intervention achieved its objectives.

*Evaluation question 3: To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved at the output level?*

The evaluation examined to what extent the expected results of the project at output and at outcome levels have been achieved (results level of the theory of change). It checked the validity of the internal assumptions, which supposedly make it possible to transition from implementing activities, to creating changes for the direct (output) and indirect (outcome) beneficiaries.

#### Efficiency

Under efficiency, the evaluation team assessed the use of resources and assets. The evaluation particularly analysed the extent to which peacebuilding worked as an operative conceptual framework to federate the action of several UN agencies. This aspect is particularly important for organisational learning, for three reasons:

- It relates directly to the choice of the funding instrument (the PBF),
- It is paramount for the implementation of the UNDAF and Delivering as One approach,

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<sup>22</sup> Peacebuilding Priority Plans for Kyrgyzstan 2013-2016 and 2017-2020 and UN Peacebuilding Support Office Guidance note "What does "sustaining peace" mean?", United Nations, New York, 17 January 2017.

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- It is directly connected to the UN reform, which encourages the entire “UN family” to deliver results closest to the rights holders by making the most of the complementary approaches and abilities of all UN entities.

Beyond the accountability towards the donor regarding the management of human and financial resources, the efficiency criterion gave indications as to specific potentials of UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP in this context and how they were put to use.

*Evaluation question 4: To what extent have the project implementers optimized their assets and comparative advantages?*

The project was operating within a dynamic context and has endeavoured to create mutual synergies with existing processes. Beyond the mere aspect of coherence, the evaluation team assessed how these synergies contributed to the efficiency of the project.

*Evaluation question 5: To what extent were interventions under this project complementary, harmonized, coordinated with the government's and other peacebuilding actors' interventions?*

### Impact

At the close of an 18 months project, its indirect, intended and unintended impacts can hardly be observed, especially at the level of ambition of peacebuilding. The evaluation team therefore looked at whether the project strategies and approaches are plausibly contributing to peace and stability in border areas (likelihood of impact), so as to identify emerging trends.

The evaluation endeavoured to derive organisational learning regarding the likelihood of impact generated by the interface between peacebuilding and youth empowerment.

*Evaluation question 6: How effective have the project strategies and approaches been in contributing to peace and stability in border areas?*

### Sustainability

While it is essential to assess if the expected benefits of the intervention have lasted beyond the end of the implementation, at this point in time, this is too early to establish: the evaluation therefore focussed on whether the conditions for such benefits are in place and how likely is it that the project's contribution to peacebuilding will last in the long run.

*Evaluation question 7: How likely is it that the project's contribution to peacebuilding at the Kyrgyz/Uzbek borders will last in the long run?*

### Gender, Human Rights and Equity

These aspects were not treated separately, but rather mainstreamed throughout the evaluation criteria.

Under the relevance criterion, the evaluation team tested to what extent the project design was based on a human rights analysis, gender analysis, and whether it has led to gender transformative results within the theory of change.<sup>23</sup> Under effectiveness and impact, the team assessed the level of inclusiveness of the project in terms of equity and leaving no one behind, and whether the project contributed to access to human rights by the rights holders, in particular as it is a part of the theory of change itself. This in turn enabled to test the plausibility of the contribution to equity at the impact level.

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<sup>23</sup> United Nations Country Team, UN Common Country Analysis Update Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, December 2019.

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## 4.2 Methods for Data Collection, Analysis, and Sampling

### Sampling

The evaluation sampled four municipalities for in-depth data collection with direct and final beneficiaries (which would not have been feasible in all locations covered by the project), as per the ToR. The sample was discussed and approved by the Evaluation Reference Group.<sup>24</sup> The sampled municipalities were Kashkar-Kyshtak (Osh), Aidarken (Batken) and Kok-Serek and Kerben (Jalalabad).

The rich, in-depth qualitative data collected in the sampled locations served to analyse the results and impact of the project on local communities, exploring especially the realisation of the theory of change's assumptions. Particular focus was placed on the youth's ability to influence their community, the way the community and the local duty bearers reacted to the empowerment of the youth, and whether and how parents and teachers have played a positive role as transmission belts between the youth and their community. The team examined how the youth and their communities managed to inflect municipal decision making, in particular through municipal plans and budgetary decisions. Data in these municipalities illustrated the interethnic dialogue as well as dialogue between rights holders and duty bearers, and how these influenced attitudes towards diversity.

The ToR further envisaged three human interest stories. For these, the team selected individual stories from interviewees. The selection was based on the interviewees' communication on their involvement in depth, their ability to describe their own context, and readiness to explore new or unexpected insights into the subject. There also had to be two human interest stories from among the rights holders (1 female, 1 male), and one human interest story from among duty bearers, located in different districts. As a human-interest story does not require a random or representative sample, these stories were identified through brainstorming among the evaluation team, the Child Rights Monitoring officer and UNICEF Communications team.

### Data Grouping

Data collection tools needed to be varied and complementary to secure strict triangulation of data. This section presents how data was grouped, and which data collection tools were used to this end.

Data grouping:

1. General data concerning the entire evaluation scope, mixing qualitative and quantitative methods. This data was sourced through all data collection tools, as follows:
  - Document review;
  - Interviews with informants having a broad overview of the action;
  - Focus groups and interviews with informants having an overview of the action;
  - Interviews with CSO representatives, youth participants, parents, mentors, teachers, community members, who can give insights on certain aspects of the project, including specific questions during interviews with national and local representatives;
  - Social media analysis.
2. In-depth data at local level in sampled municipalities:
  - Interviews with the current municipal administration and elected officials, other relevant duty bearers and service providers;
  - Interviews with rights holders (including youth, parents, mentors, teachers, and community leaders), local/national/international NGOs;

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<sup>24</sup> More about the sampling process for the evaluation, see annex 4.



- Collection and review of additional documents in the concerned municipalities (e.g. samples of instructions, joint action plans, initiatives introduced by youth, sample of decisions regarding support of these initiatives, sample of reports produced locally, material relating to capacity-building measures of the project).

## Data collection

### Document review

The evaluation team reviewed documents for several purposes:

- Retrace the “story” of the project’s contribution to peacebuilding on the southern border of Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan;
- Compare the vision, strategies and principles that transpire from the project and the aspirations of various actors at local level, including in particular youth and their communities, as well as local self-government representatives and local public service providers;
- Test the theory of change of the project in relation to the national and regional peacebuilding efforts as embodied by national documents;
- Compare the vision, strategies and principles that transpire from the project’s and the Government of Kyrgyzstan’s strategic objectives;
- Trace the project’s contributions to decision making in the sampled locations;
- Analyse the inputs and activities invested by the project and other actors into peacebuilding.

The documents analysed were of several types, addressing all EQs:<sup>25</sup>

- Background documents publicly available (e.g. reports by monitoring bodies/ monitoring mechanisms of UN);
- General strategic documents of the Government of Kyrgyzstan (e.g. national strategies such as the Joint action plan 2017-2019 and provinces’ joint action plans, and Memorandum of Understanding of the State Agency for Youth and Sport with its Uzbek counterpart);
- Strategic documents of UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and the PBF;
- Guiding documents and publications from UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and the PBF, pertaining to evaluation methodology, peacebuilding, youth empowerment and other related topics;
- UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP project and programme documents, reports, budgetary documents, pertaining to the project;
- Proceeds of project activities such as minutes, agendas, lists of participants, presentations, etc.
- Documents related to interaction with the donor.

### Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured, remote interviews cover all the evaluation questions. Based on implementing partners’ and local mentors’ recommendations about contact points (snowball sampling of interviewees), the evaluation team reached out to various stakeholders.<sup>26</sup> UNICEF has mentors in every village, who could cover the participation of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA project participants.

The National Consultant and International Consultant held interviews with United Nations

<sup>25</sup> List of documents in section 8: References, and annex 17: List of Project Documents.

<sup>26</sup> For the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation and the rationale for the choice of interviewees, see stakeholder analysis in annex 2 and list of interviewee categories in annex 5, and inception report.



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and duty bearers at national level, while the national expert interviewed rights holders and local beneficiaries (youth, parents, mentors, teachers), all according to the interview templates (see annexes 6-10).

Targeted interview partners from the sampled municipalities enabled to collect the experiences and opinions of stakeholders (rights holders and duty bearers: territorial divisions of the State Registry Service, law enforcement, legal aid, CSO project partners, youth participants, parents, mentors, teachers, community members). In particular, this method informed whether and how the project has met the needs of the beneficiaries (relevance), achieved its objectives (effectiveness), and secured conditions to have lasting effects (impact and sustainability), at the municipal level. Interviews with rights holders further informed on the perception of the project by the beneficiaries, the changes observed during the project, personal experiences, changes in attitudes and behaviours experienced and observed, and the expected impact. These one-time interviews also opened the way to a follow-up for two Human Interest Stories, on a voluntary and informed basis (see below, Ethics section, and in Inception report).

In total 92 persons were interviewed from November 11 to November 30, 2020:

- Staff of the UN agencies involved in the project, and other international stakeholders (PBF, UN Regional Office): 10 people were interviewed
- National duty bearers and duty bearers in the Provinces: 24 people
- Youth Union of Uzbekistan: 1 person
- CSO project partners and activists: 15 people
- Rights holders on local level (youth, parents, teachers, mentors, community members): 52 people

Notes were taken verbatim in (or translated into) English within the templates for comparability purposes, and shared only within the evaluation team. Deep interviewing techniques were used so as to ensure rich qualitative data. Interviews were held in confidence, to preserve anonymity. The interviewees were informed and asked for consent as to the potential collection of representative quotes for the final report, which were by no means to be attributable. Some interviews were held with children (see Ethics section), as youth project participants were aged 13-28. In the case-study municipalities, interviewed beneficiaries were sampled by referral (snowball sampling). The collected data is deemed to be reliable, while recognising the bias that may arise from snowball sampling and low access to internet in remote and underserved regions. The evaluation team actively attempted to hear the points of view of hard-to-reach beneficiaries and vulnerable groups, such as rights holders from remote areas, young women and girls, and persons belonging to national minorities. Keeping this focus in mind, the bias was remediated as much as possible, sometimes by the interviewees themselves (unprompted) who relayed other people's experiences. The interviewees were offered a discussion beforehand, and a written consent form.

### Focus groups

The evaluation team organised two online focus group discussions. One focus group involved CSO representatives involved in the project (two per partner CSO including "Youth of Osh", "Accelerate Prosperity", "International Debate Education Association in Central Asia" and "Association of legal clinics of Kyrgyzstan", amounting to 8 people) on 8 December 2020, to present and validate the preliminary findings. The other involved United Nations staff (8 people), on 17 December 2020, to test possible recommendations. They operated under Chatham House rules, but notes were taken verbatim by the evaluation team for its own analysis and confrontation with interview and document review results.

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## Social media analysis

For the purpose of the evaluation and as discussed during the inception phase, the platform Instagram was examined. Social media analysis aimed to compare the attitudes of the general population with project participants' views, as well as to corroborate the needs of the beneficiaries. The keyword search was hampered by several factors (see annex 3: Social Media Analysis), but the data gathered could nevertheless corroborate several findings.

## Risks and limitations

The risks and limitations identified in the inception report were verified and countermeasures applied successfully.<sup>27</sup> Most prominently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and public health measures, interviews and focus groups were conducted remotely. This only marginally impacted on the amount of data necessary for triangulation: the project had gone online already in the course of 2020, and by the time evaluation interviews were conducted, the stakeholders had already adapted to the circumstances.

The evaluation team, supported by the UNICEF Osh office and the implementing partners, identified and contacted rights holders in sufficient number. Their access to phone or internet could be secured with the help of the implementing partners. Interviews with the rights holders were sometimes rather short, and the depth of reflection varied a lot from interviewee to interviewee: this could be linked to varying degree of comfort with online interaction, but also stems from cultural discretion regarding the sensitive topics tackled by the project. While on-site interviews could have added depth marginally, there is no indication that this factor severely affected the quality of the data.

Access to duty bearers was affected, not only by the remoteness of data collection, but also by the events following the October Parliamentary Elections, which generated some turn-over among officials. The evaluation team reached out to a large number of interlocutors to compensate for this turn-over. In addition, unlike elected officials, the administrative staff remained relatively stable and could be interviewed.

Another important factor was that the evaluation took place immediately at the end of the project. On the one end, this created limits to assess the long-term impact of the project, because it simply could not be observed: this limitation was fully acknowledged in the terms of reference of the evaluation, and the evaluation looked into potential of impact, rather than impact per se. On the other hand, this timing increased the reliability of the data, because memories were fresh, stakeholders were still ready to interact regarding a project that engaged them until recently, and documentary evidence (archived and online including on social media) was easily available.

Other limitations, in particular concerning attribution of broad changes to this relatively small project, inherent to most evaluations, were compensated by contribution analysis. The quality of the interview data and the variety of people interviewed allowed to clearly identify changes, causalities, and analyse plausible contributions, following the steps of a theory of change-based analysis.

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<sup>27</sup> See risks and limitations section in the Inception report, annex 16.

### 4.3 Ethical Issues and Considerations

#### Ethical principles

The overall approach adhered strongly to the ethical guidelines of the United Nations system and UNICEF:<sup>28</sup>

- UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis (2015)
- The obligations of evaluators in the United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines (2008)
- The United Nations Evaluation Group’s Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016)
- Ethical research involving Children, ERIC Compendium (2013)
- PBF Guidance Assessing Readiness for Remote Evaluation
- UNICEF Policy on Personal Data Protection (2020)
- Ethical Considerations in Using Social Media for Evidence Generation (2018)
- UNICEF Ethical Considerations for Evidence Generation Involving Children on the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020)

The evaluation team has prepared and implemented an evaluation approach that meets the ethical evaluation obligations and principles as described further.

**Table 1:** Observance of the UNEG ethical standards by the evaluation team

<b>Respect for dignity and diversity</b>	Both national evaluation team members were recruited to carry out the fieldwork and to support the evaluation team. The team members were fully aware of local culture, local customs, religious practices, ethnicity, in particular as regards the gender roles and the evolving role of youth, and of other traits, to ensure respect during data collection. The disruption was to be kept to minimum providing notices to individuals and partner institutions in advance to allow the national consultants involved in data collection to plan their schedule beforehand, so that each counterpart had the time to organize for remote meeting arrangements, thus securing the conditions to respect people’s right to privacy. This anticipation enabled the team to check the representativeness of interviewees, the inclusion of both ethnic groups to the maximum extent, the gender balance, as well as the inclusion of more vulnerable stakeholders. The very structure of the project lent itself well to an inclusive, diverse outreach to stakeholders.
<b>Rights</b>	<p>a. Right to Self-Determination: participants of the evaluation were treated as autonomous agents. They were involved in data collection based on their voluntary participation and were able to opt out of the process at any time. The evaluation participants were informed fully about 1) the aims of the evaluation and the background/composition of the evaluation team, 2) why they were invited to participate in the evaluation, and 3) what the benefits of the evaluation would be.</p> <p>b. Fair Representation: participants were selected fairly in relation to the aims of the evaluation, covering all project sites and all project stakeholder groups.</p>

<sup>28</sup> UNICEF, Ethical Considerations When Using Social Media for Evidence Generation <[www.unicef-irc.org/publications/968-ethical-considerations-when-using-social-media-for-evidence-generation-research-brief.html](http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/968-ethical-considerations-when-using-social-media-for-evidence-generation-research-brief.html)> [10/10/2020].

	<p>c. Compliance with codes for vulnerable groups: the evaluation team observed the international and national norms that govern interviewing children and young people. The human rights background of the Team Leader, and a human rights-based evaluation approach which envisaged the various stakeholders as rights holders and/or duty bearers (as duty bearers are also citizens with their rights), and which entrenches issues related to access to rights at the very heart of the evaluation matrix, helped secure the respect for the rights of the stakeholders throughout the evaluation process and the integration of human rights considerations in the data collection and analysis.</p> <p>Finally, the conflict analysis and peacebuilding lens, which serve as benchmarks to evaluate the relevance of the project both contain important human rights elements: this aspect added to the human rights orientation of the evaluation, both for data collection and for analysis.</p>
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<p>The evaluation team respected people’s right to provide information in confidence. The evaluation participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. They were clearly informed of the confidentiality measures: their contributions were aggregated and anonymized in the report, and their responses were kept confidential. The final report has no reference to any names of interviewees. While the final evaluation report may include quotes, which are representative of widespread opinions expressed by the interviewees, they have been screened by the evaluation team members to check they are not attributable. Evaluation participants were informed of this process. During interviews and focus groups, the evaluation participants were asked permission to take notes from interviews and discussions. Evaluation consultants explained that detailed note-taking would assure the accuracy of the data. All interview notes were kept within the evaluation team only (not forwarded to any other actor, even UN agencies), stored in a password-protected drive during the evaluation, and completely deleted upon completion of the evaluation. No sensitive personal information was expected from the interviews.</p>
<b>No harm</b>	<p>Following the “do no harm principle”, and the principle of benevolence not malevolence, the evaluation team made sure to minimize risks to, and burdens on, people participating in the evaluation. The evaluation sought to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harm that might occur from negative or critical evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation. The no-harm data-collection process included clear information about the data sought to be sent in advance to the evaluation participants, online meetings and Key Informant Interview were planned according to participants’ availability. The duration of the meetings and interviews were kept within generally acceptable time-limits.</p>

The research needed for this evaluation included interviews with underage young people. Children involved in the evaluation were between 14-18 years old. The elements of the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection

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and Analysis (2015) were observed such as: Respect, Informed consent, Privacy and confidentiality, Harms and benefits, Justice, Payment and Compensation. A special procedure was applied to obtain informed consent from children and their parents (see consent forms in annex 11). As this evaluation was conducted entirely online and the UN implementing agencies and partner CSOs supported logistically the evaluation team to arrange online meetings, the project team was asked to inform the parents regarding the evaluation and supported the consent procedure (signed forms) prior to interviews. The children were informed about their right to choose the level of involvement in the process of evaluation. The evaluation team ensured the data confidentiality at all levels.

### Ethical Review Procedure

The inception report, including evaluation methodology, interview templates, and consent forms were submitted to the Ethics Review Board in parallel with the quality assurance procedure. Ethical approval was given on 11 November 2020 (see letter of approval in Annex 11), after which the data collection phase started.



# EVALUATION FINDINGS



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## 5. EVALUATION FINDINGS

### 5.1 Relevance and Coherence

**Evaluation question 1: To what extent were the project results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries, especially of the young women and men?**

#### Key Findings:

**Finding 1:** The empowerment approach to peacebuilding at grassroots level is relevant, as it responds to the most urgent need of the beneficiaries.

**Finding 2:** The link between youth empowerment and peacebuilding is not clearly perceived by beneficiaries.

**Finding 3:** The project document diplomatically formulated this project as a cross-border initiative, but concrete activities formed a mostly interethnic programme within Kyrgyzstan.

**Finding 4:** Labour migration issue was overlooked.

**Finding 5:** Gender equality and empowerment of women was best targeted within the equity-focused approach of the project.

**Finding 1:** The youth empowerment approach to peacebuilding at grassroots level is relevant, as it responds to the most urgent needs of the beneficiaries.

#### Triangulated evidence basis

Interviews with youth participants, parents, teachers, mentors, municipal authorities and leaders, implementing partners, duty bearers, UN staff

Focus group discussion with CSO representatives

Social media output and media coverage of the project

Academic publications

Project Document

United Nations Peacebuilding Priority Plans for Kyrgyzstan

The analysis of the project documents, confirmed by the interviews with the UN and implementing partners, show that the project targeted a relevant and comprehensive list of stakeholders, from the national to the grassroots level, which corresponded to the intentions of the theory of change. Youth participation in the project design phase is required for a Youth Promotion Initiative of the PBF,<sup>29</sup> and this proved essential for the project's relevance. The project then matched the needs of the respective groups of beneficiaries with tailored activities, which were perceived as relevant by almost all interviewees.

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<sup>29</sup> <[www.pbfgyipi.org/](http://www.pbfgyipi.org/)> [22/02/21].

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The theory of change of the project pinpoints economic and social stability and prosperity in Kyrgyzstan's border areas (second expected impact in the theory of change) as a key element of peacebuilding, which was validated in the design phase by stocktaking with beneficiaries. High unemployment, lack of perspective and lack of "agency" affect social stability and prosperity in the targeted regions, which in turn exacerbates or creates tensions over resources, and makes individuals, especially the youth, easier to instrumentalize in conflict dynamics.<sup>30</sup> These shortcomings affect the youth and their access to economic and social rights particularly (such as the right to work, right to an adequate standard of living),<sup>31</sup> and age-specific vulnerabilities at that stage in life have lasting repercussions. Labour migration to Russia is a symptom of the limitations to social stability and prosperity in the targeted regions. It is a widespread strategy of households in reaction to unemployment and the lack of income-generating opportunities for young people, as attested in academic research and consistently confirmed by interviewees. According to interviewees from among CSOs and local duty bearers, and confirmed by academic writings, the families' most widespread strategy is that young men become labour migrants, while young women tend to marry soon after their majority – and may rely on a remittances from a husband or another relative, male or female. However, there are also young women who leave to work in Russia. Therefore, labour migration is not exclusively a male strategy.

#### Quotes (implementing partners)

*"I expected, when coming to these communities, a different attitude: seeing the kind of conditions they live in (cold in winter, no electricity, no internet), I would have expected them to complain, but no! I realised what vulnerability really was. It helped me realize that our priority as a society was to provide the basic conditions for them (education, electricity, internet connection). Sometimes, just because of the rain, their areas would be cut off from the internet grid! They don't have a sense of entitlement – but at the same time with the project they became aware that their voice and their needs need to be heard."*

*"In South Kyrgyzstan, as soon as they are 16 and get a passport, the youth leave to Russia to become labour migrants. Those who stay are those who were not able to go to Russia. Social pressure is to go work abroad because there is no future in their homelands. It is hard to find anyone around 18 in South Kyrgyzstan."*

Having identified these shortcomings in the social and economic fabric of the targeted regions, the project designers aligned project planning with the expectations of the beneficiaries: the youth themselves, their caregivers and teachers, their community and local self-governance organs. The project targeted, at result level, the youth as civic activists and potential entrepreneurs supported by their communities (second result of the theory of change). The logic was that the youth themselves, supported by their community, had the highest potential to demand and access their rights, and in turn reduce economic and social tensions which contribute to conflict. The project designers in consultation with implementing partners then researched the specific needs of the youth to use this potential: they concluded that their capacity (skills, experiences, attitudes and self-confidence) needed strengthening, and that their participation (in processes among peers, within their community and with duty bearers) needed to be mediated and facilitated. Interviews confirm this diagnosis. The project therefore adequately matched these needs

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<sup>30</sup> Peace nexus, Conflict and Peace Analysis, Kyrgyzstan, April 2019, p. 44.

<sup>31</sup> International Covenant for Economic, social and cultural rights – Articles 6 and 11.



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with a wide but coherent range of training and workshop topics. It adequately aimed to facilitate the youth's participation within their community and support by their parents: in interviews, the youth's need for recognition of their potential transpires very often, and it is confirmed by the analysis made by the mentors and teachers.

One of the original features of the project design was to target communities, including parents, teachers and community leaders around the youth. The communities targeted by the project are underserved by international organisations, so the project filled a gap. The aspirations of parents and teachers are closely linked to the needs of the youth in their care: youth empowerment is directly relevant to their hopes for their children and students. Furthermore, as members of the community, they aspire to project's expected results in terms of participation and access to services. The theory of change therefore rightly assumed parents and teachers to be accelerators for actions targeting youth, and their support to be instrumental to youth-led initiatives. According to this assumption, without parents' and teachers' support, the youth could not have accessed the project activities – they may have even been stopped by reluctant parents. With their support, the participation of the youth became possible, and a place would be carved for the youth's involvement in community-wide decisions and projects. The project directly acted on this assumption, by involving parents and teachers with parenting programmes and capacity building to support youth participation in parallel with project activities aimed at youth. This proved essential to the success of youth activities at outcome level, as stated in interviews of youth participants, parents, teachers and implementing partners.

The project further targeted local self-governance bodies as well as national government actors as duty bearers of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the end beneficiaries (third result of the theory of change). For duty bearers at local and province level, in terms of peace building, the role of youth is also crucial in the present and future economic development and prosperity – and, in turn, access to economic and social rights as well as social cohesion. This perception was expressed in interviews, and it explains why the project's focus on the youth was appreciated by local duty bearers. Likewise, access to services is recognized by local duty bearers as an important element of social cohesion: this aspect of the project was therefore in line with their expectations. Duty bearers also welcome the idea that the population in general, and youth in particular, should have legal outlets and possibilities to channel grievances and demand their rights in non-violent ways – but the local capacity to support such processes is often insufficient. Mediation and legal aid are directly sought to address this gap.

In a similar way, national duty bearers rely on youth for social peace, especially in border areas. In addition to the assumptions of the theory of change that youth are instrumental in conflict dynamics and that youth want peace (as actors of the present, not only in future), national duty bearers are starting to comprehend the potential of the youth to influence their community in either peaceful or less peaceful ways: national duty bearers, in particular the Youth Agency, therefore need to establish a more direct link with the local youth. This was also part of the project activities, which adds up to a very strong relevance of the project activities overall.

The United Nations agencies used an inclusive process to ensure a good match between the aspirations and needs of the stakeholders towards the full enjoyment of their rights on the one hand, and the expected results and impacts, as well as target groups of the project on the other hand. The project design team, consistent with its peacebuilding conceptual framework, enabled stakeholders to participate in the design phase, either by collaborating with State agencies, or with public consultations and focus group discussions in the target municipalities. The project then tailored activities to various social groups. End beneficiaries were not necessarily aware of this, but they appraised the project activities for adequately addressing gridlocked problems, albeit on a small scale. For example, local

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duty bearers felt that all activities conducted at the level of municipality were relevant, including the activities with the young people.

In addition, throughout the implementation, the project adapted approaches and activities to meet the needs or raised issues during the project by the various groups of stakeholders, like the State Registry Service, improvement of the cross-border units, developing the website for Ministry of Labour and Social Development on state benefits and social allowances. The changes included lateral transfers of budget between activities, consistent with the intertwinements in the UN agencies' collaboration. This adaptation is fundamentally in line with the expectations of the Peacebuilding Fund according to its Learning and Adaptation strategy.<sup>32</sup>

**Finding 2:** The link between youth empowerment and peacebuilding is not clearly perceived by beneficiaries.

#### Triangulated evidence basis

Interviews with youth, implementing partners, municipalities, local and national duty bearers, UN staff

The theory of change explicitly linked youth empowerment with peacebuilding through strengthening interethnic cohesion, and contributing to social peace in border areas. Youth empowerment served as an optimal access point to wider social impact associated with peacebuilding and indeed has. From the perspective of the Peacebuilding Fund, the core meaning, at impact and purpose levels, is coined in clear terms.

#### Quote (PBF staff)

*"This project is not about development of the youth. The project is about participation of the youth in the peacebuilding process."*

Interviewees, including mentors and implementing partners, as well as some duty bearers validated the choice of the youth as a good entry point for social cohesion and participation, with higher returns on invested resources compared to alternative target social groups.

#### Quote (implementing partner)

*"I had never worked before near the border. Uzbek and Kyrgyz people, but the problem is that they don't mix and they don't trust each other. It is not an open conflict, there is no violence, but rather they just keep a distance. But the youth have a different attitude. Youth from the border communities are more ready to engage actively in the project. By the end of the project, they still work together."*

#### Quote (mentor)

*"I am proud of being part of the opportunities that the teenagers have seen under the project – the places they visited, even the hotels they have stayed at during the trips, and also the social projects they have accomplished, and also proud of the opportunity to bring together teenagers from three provinces."*

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<sup>32</sup> UN Peacebuilding / Katinka Patscher-Hellbeck, Strategic Peacebuilding Review. PBF Portfolio in Kyrgyzstan 2018-2020, July 2020, p. 20.

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However, when participants reflect on what the project meant to them, on a personal level, and for their wider environment, peacebuilding and interethnic relations do not spontaneously appear in their reflection (as opposed to youth empowerment). Generally, participants (both youth and their parents) do not talk openly of interethnic environment in their communities, and when asked explicitly, they tend to deny tensions or refer to “the other”. From the perspective of the stakeholders, the vehicle (youth empowerment) took over the purpose for various reasons. Some interviewees among the youth and their parents had a difficult time connecting project activities in which they had participated with the declared project purposes (interethnic cohesion). A few young people even dismissed the link between the activities and the purposes altogether. The quote below shows that some participants did not understand the link between what they did during the project, and the purpose of the project, even after this purpose was presented to them. This doesn’t mean the link between youth empowerment and peacebuilding is absent – but stakeholders do not easily perceive it.

Quote (youth)

*“The project was about strengthening relations between young people of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. But I don’t know how. That is what they told us about the project.”*

All the interviewees in selected locations stated that residents of all ethnic backgrounds (including minorities) live peacefully in their community. Such a positive appraisal is partly due to a cultural norm in the Southern part of the country. It is considered inappropriate to directly express anything that may be upsetting, to openly criticize, or argue. This tendency is increased as government statements deny the existence of any interethnic conflicts.<sup>33</sup> Interethnic disagreements tend to be cast as cross-border or little domestic disputes that must be solved by the national government. Border problems, not interethnic tension, are often presented as the root of all troubles, and the expectation that border delineation will certainly put an end to all problems is widespread. However, both research and anecdotal evidence manifest the fallacy of this assumption. Evidence demonstrates that even in areas with delineated border, there are conflicts. The root reason is more likely the sense of insecurity of border areas’ residents and limited access to justice.<sup>34</sup> What field research has shown is that border-related disputes (for instance, over land, water or pasturing places) and interethnic defiance reinforce each other, as envisaged by conflict analysis. For instance, when asked about the conflict situations that the project intends to address, interviewees talked about a few anecdotes of cross-border incidents, and in parallel they evoked lives apart for communities across the border. In the same context, while they did not talk about separation of ethnic communities within Kyrgyzstan, they still shared their thoughts about lack of mutual trust among communities and more generally a lack of trust among different actors of the society, illustrated for instance by the reluctance of certain parents to let their children participate, or the low expectations displayed towards state services. These nuanced and varied inputs, show that, while perceptions on the role

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<sup>33</sup> For instance the Kyrgyz authorities claim that “both sides [ethnic groups] had guns and committed violence”. The Kyrgyz authorities also have not admitted that there were more ethnic Uzbek people among the victims of the 2010 conflict, Human Rights Watch, Kyrgyzstan: Justice Elusive 10 Years On, 9 June 2020, <[www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/09/kyrgyzstan-justice-elusive-10-years](http://www.hrw.org/news/2020/06/09/kyrgyzstan-justice-elusive-10-years)>;

This report of the OSCE meeting lists where the Kyrgyz Government has failed its interethnic policy - <[www.osce.org/files/f/0/docu-ments/3/c/432293\\_0.pdf](http://www.osce.org/files/f/0/docu-ments/3/c/432293_0.pdf)>; about the various Government officials’ reaction to the international report, making the Finnish investigator a persona non-grata and accusing him of inaccurate reporting, <<https://kloop.kg/blog/2011/05/26/zhogorku-kenesh-zapretil-kimmo-kilyunenu-vezd-v-kyrgyzstan/>> [27/01/2021].

<sup>34</sup> Murzakulova, Asel, Gulbara Omorova and Evgenii Shibkov, Reconsidering the Meaning of Neighbourship: The Transformation of Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan Border Areas after 2016, MSRI Brief, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.19225.98406, May 2019 <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335161251\\_Reconsidering\\_the\\_meaning\\_of\\_neighbourship\\_the\\_transformation\\_of\\_Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan\\_border\\_areas\\_after\\_2016](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335161251_Reconsidering_the_meaning_of_neighbourship_the_transformation_of_Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan_border_areas_after_2016)> [12/12/2020].

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of the border differ depending on individual experiences, the question of the border is usually seen as prominent, while interethnic relations are quickly discarded. This tends to confirm the conflict analysis behind the theory of change, especially the assumption that improved cross-border and inter-state relations on the one hand, and social/interethnic peace (and the trust that it breeds) on the other hand, are mutually reinforcing.

#### Quote (mentor)

*“People in border areas also have more fears, they don’t trust – neither the authorities, nor other people. Why they don’t trust the authorities – because their issues (at borders) haven’t been solved for many years, they are in regime of self-survival, self-reliance.”*

#### Quotes (parents)

*“There are many cases of intermarriage here, between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz. Many young people are friends with each other, in adult groups of friends you can also see both ethnicities. Uzbek people are well integrated here.”*

*“Our relatives are here and in Uzbekistan, 60km away from us. My sisters are married and live there. We go to Uzbekistan without any problems, they just check your passport. No interethnic problems [unprompted by the interviewer].”*

*“In our village we only have Kyrgyz people. There is an Uzbek village, but there is a border between us, so people don’t go there. ”*

*“What can help is probably if the border issues get solved: I believe, there are still some issues unsolved.”*

#### Quote (youth)

*“Our village is close to the border, that is why Uzbek and Kyrgyz people are mixed here, they all live here. In some villages Uzbek and Kyrgyz people live in separate parts of the villages (Kyrgyz – right side, Uzbek – left side). But we have no conflicts between people in the village.”*

#### Quote (teacher)

*“One of main topics [of the project activities] was on conflicts, how to manage them, how to solve them, since it is an acute topic in the South. We have a border with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, and the issues haven’t been solved yet. So, we explain to our pupils that the situation depends on our neighbouring countries. And that they are the ones who initiate conflicts.”*

At the same time, the unprompted claim that “everything is ok” when interviewees deny interethnic problems, the lack of communication and interaction between communities, and the elusive language used by Kyrgyz authorities to describe interethnic relations, all illustrate the underlying tension. Due to the denial of interethnic tension within Kyrgyzstan, the stakeholders most likely refrained from expressing the need for inclusive dialogue at community level, during the project design and activity planning phases. There is also

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very little social media activity of villagers in general regarding interethnic relations or cross-border/local incidents. Relatively poor internet connection clearly contributes to this, preventing people from manifesting more of their societal activity online. Nonetheless, the persistence of interethnic and cross-border tension is tangibly channelled by interviewees' choice of words, though not manifested explicitly. The interethnic relations expert we have consulted also claims there are online discussions on Tajik, Uzbek, Kyrgyz interaction, including hate speech, however they are limited to restricted Facebook communities that are closed to outsiders whom administrators do not know personally.

**Quote (teacher)**

*"Since 2010,<sup>35</sup> parents are still concerned about the safety [of their children]."*

**Quote (parent)**

*"We have Tajik-Kyrgyz conflict in our place. There is even shooting sometimes at the border. Tajik people live among us, not in isolation. When there are conflict times, we become cautious with each other, expecting that the other person may attack. There is tension in those periods. Tajik people even close their homes. But in peaceful times we live peacefully. "*

**Finding 3:** The project document diplomatically formulated this project as a cross-border initiative, but concrete activities formed a mostly interethnic programme within Kyrgyzstan.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Project documents (design / implementation)

Interviews with implementing partners, UN staff, duty bearers, Peacebuilding Fund

Focus group discussion with CSO representatives, focus group discussion with UN staff

Cross-border interaction is an intended result within the theory of change of the project (interethnic and cross-border youth interaction, and new cross-border cooperation experiences for State actors), as well as an aspect of the intended impacts level (Kyrgyz and Uzbek women and men are involved in an inclusive dialogue within Kyrgyzstan and across the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border, and Kyrgyz and Uzbek local self-government and state actors increase cooperation and dialogue). The project document reflects this approach, both in the short theory of change presented in the project description, and in the narrative of expected results.

The intention of the project document was to make the United Nations' peacebuilding agenda acceptable to national duty bearers to enable collaboration. This way of proceeding opened the possibility of eventual ownership, by harnessing the existing dynamics between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek Governments, which in turn increased the cooperation effort between the youth agencies of both countries. It was therefore essential for the three UN organisations not to deter Government stakeholders with language on interethnic relations, which would clash with the official perception that this is a non-issue.

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<sup>35</sup> Major interethnic conflict in the South of the Kyrgyz Republic, primarily cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad.

**Quote (UN staff)**

*“The main challenge has been: the State is in denial that it has a problem. Ethnic cohesion, conflict, are taboos with a heavy bureaucracy [...]. But evidence of progress can help us think of scaling up and planning more long term.”*

Yet, the project is conceived as exclusively active within the territory of Kyrgyzstan.<sup>36</sup>The project organised only few cross-border interactions. The project mostly supported the implementation of activities foreseen by the Kyrgyzstan Youth State Agency plan for cooperation with its Uzbekistan counterpart. The most visible and symbolic were four one-off events organised in person in 2019: two events in Osh, one in Jalalabad and one in Batken), in cooperation with the State Agency and the provinces (Jalalabad, Batken) and Osh city. In addition, to the extent possible, other project activities implemented exclusively in Kyrgyzstan (not cross-border events) involved citizens of Uzbekistan who live on the territory of Kyrgyzstan: for instance, UNDP legal clinics involved Uzbek citizens studying in Kyrgyzstan.

However, the project stayed clearly focussed on its main target groups: Kyrgyz citizens with diverse cultural and ethnic background. The first reason for this approach was feasibility: at the time of project drafting, cross-border interactions were still difficult to secure in practice. In contrast, interethnic experiences were lighter to implement, as operating within the country was less bureaucratic and easier to coordinate. They also responded closely to the most pressing issues identified by conflict analysis, and the needs for facilitation of interethnic interactions, perceived by the three UN organisations in the regions adjacent to the Uzbek border, as presented in Finding 2 above.

The project design was therefore tailored to the duality of peacebuilding needs in Kyrgyzstan, addressing both internal (within Kyrgyzstan) and external issues (cross-border). While both needed to be addressed, the local needs for mediated interethnic encounters could not be addressed explicitly in the project document. The project drafting team opted for a practical solution: the outcome and outputs of the project of the project professed a cross-border approach; the activities described in the project documents focused on the Kyrgyz territory exclusively; the project team still pursued efforts to increase cross-border activities during the implementation.

The project thus managed to align the diverging visions and expectations of different stakeholders: the national Government level, who acknowledges transborder tensions but sees no interethnic conflicts in the country; the local level, preoccupied by cross-border issues but mostly in demand of opportunities for social and economic development; the PBF who wanted to address both issues identified in conflict analysis: interethnic relations and interstate relations. The project thereby mastered a tight-rope exercise of combining forces that seemed contradictory at first glance. The approach was well suited to the Kyrgyz situation and innovative in the face of a sensitive issue.

**Finding 4: The labour migration issue was overlooked.**

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Project document

Interviews with implementing partners, parents, youth

Academic papers

<sup>36</sup> PBF project document, p. 10: All activities were to take place within the Kyrgyz side of the border.



The project specifically targeted the youth, but their labour migration issues were not fully factored in. Migration and its implications were not a part of the theory of change nor of the project documents as a factor that influences local prosperity, social cohesion or interethnic relations. Due to the magnitude of labour migration and how it affects the demographics of underserved regions such as rural border areas, this aspect must be acknowledged and addressed assertively.

The report on selection of target communities in Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken provinces for the project acknowledges the issue and its magnitude among the youth, pointing to 2018 official estimates.<sup>37</sup> During the interviews it was confirmed that labour migration is high among border communities, e.g. “many people from Kerben leave to Russia for labour migration, mainly Uzbeks” (teacher). Academic research has also identified that border communities from the Southern provinces are especially prone to engage in external labour migration to Russia, as a coping strategy for the decline of agricultural production.<sup>38</sup> The project intended to boost local economy, including employment: therefore labour migration, as a major economic factor locally, should have been part of the project’s problem analysis.

The interviews with the representatives of the local self-governance bodies confirmed that by the time they complete their secondary education, young people – mostly (but not exclusively) young men – aspire to migrate, seeking jobs outside of the country, mainly to Russia.<sup>39</sup> Labour migration and its influence on the communities was expressed on numerous occasions during the evaluation field work:

Quote (mentor)

*“All the young people over 20 years old are in labour migration, all the teachers at schools are old and female. It is a norm that everyone leaves to earn – to build a house or to buy a car. Boys rarely speak of universities, or of their wish to get education. Girls are more about education. Boys are focused on leaving to go abroad.”*

Indeed, labour migration affects all family members, especially children who are left at home.<sup>40</sup> Implications of migration of parents on the children left behind include significantly

<sup>37</sup> Report on the analysis for selection of target communities Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken provinces, see Ulan Nogoibaev, UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project ‘Promoting Kyrgyzstan’s youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan’ (2019-2020)”, 2019 : more than 700,000 citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic migrated for work; according to unofficial data, the figure equals to one million citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic. Of these numbers, according to estimates (2018), more than 663,000 migrated to the Russian Federation, 30,000 to Kazakhstan, 14,000 to South Korea, 30,000 to Turkey, more than 20,000 people to other destinations (Europe, USA, Middle East, Asia). According to the State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, quoted in this report, the number of children under 17 living in the Russian Federation is 17% of the total number of migrated citizens in Russia. At the same time, people between the ages of 18 and 29 years old make up 50% of the total number of emigrated citizens there. People from 30 to 49 years old make up 30% of the total number of registered citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in Russia. Women make up 40% of labour migration to Russia.

<sup>38</sup> Murzakulova, Asel, Contextual Factors of Conflict in Border Communities in Batken Province, Kyrgyzstan, Technical Report, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.24353.024, September 2017 <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320014772\\_Contextual\\_Factors\\_of\\_conflict\\_in\\_Border\\_Communities\\_in\\_Batken\\_Province\\_Kyrgyzstan](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320014772_Contextual_Factors_of_conflict_in_Border_Communities_in_Batken_Province_Kyrgyzstan)> [12/12/2020], p. 20. For instance, in Talas province, external labour migration rates are quite low, given farmers have established channels to sell beans, mainly to Turkey (Tilekeyev, Kanat, Productivity Implications of Participation in Export Activities: The Case of Farmers in Talas Oblast of Kyrgyzstan, Institute of Public Policy and Administration Working Paper 17 (2013) <<https://centralasia.org/Content/downloads/UC-IPPA-WP17-BeanKR-Eng.pdf>> [05/01/2021]). Climate change, decay of agricultural infrastructure, and loss of informal agricultural knowledge are named among the reasons for agricultural decline (Sagynbekova, Lira, Environment, Rural Livelihoods, and Labor Migration: A Case Study in Central Kyrgyzstan, Mountain Research and Development 37.4 (2017): 456-463). At the same time, internal migration from villages to cities within Kyrgyzstan has become characteristic of all regions, the rural-rural migration (agricultural and construction labour) mostly from Batken, Jalal-Abad and Osh to Chui province (Murzakulova, Asel, Rural Migration in Kyrgyzstan: Drivers, Impact and Governance, University of Central Asia, MSRI Research paper # 7, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.35258.21442, June 2020, <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344362648\\_Rural\\_Migration\\_in\\_Kyrgyzstan\\_Drivers\\_Impact\\_and\\_Governance](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344362648_Rural_Migration_in_Kyrgyzstan_Drivers_Impact_and_Governance)> [12/12/2020]).

<sup>39</sup> According to the Conflict and Peace Analysis (2019), the share of women in labour migration has steadily risen since 2000, estimating 59.6 percent in 2015 of all labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan. According to IOM Kyrgyzstan website, the young people aged between 15 and 29 years working abroad constitute 60.4 percent of the total number of migrants (2018).

<sup>40</sup> <[www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/press-releases/over-277000-children-have-been-left-behind-their-parents-kyrgyzstan-labour-migration](http://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/press-releases/over-277000-children-have-been-left-behind-their-parents-kyrgyzstan-labour-migration)> [03/01/2021]. UNICEF reports that there are over 277,000 children have been left behind by their parents in Kyrgyzstan for labour migration (2018).



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lower academic scores of the children with both parents in migration, compared to those who have at least one parent at home.<sup>41</sup> Children of labour migrants are at higher risk of institutionalisation, and of having their rights violated: they suffer from child abuse and neglect, child labour, and exploitation more often than other children, rendering them more vulnerable to instrumentalization in conflict situations. The children are often raised without the role models they require.<sup>42</sup> During field work, it was confirmed that labour migration affects children the most. Some young people wish to stop labour migration by creating opportunities at home, but understand it is too complex to address on their own.

**Quote (youth)**

*“Nearly 50% of pupils in my class have their parents in Russia as labour migrants. I believe it is hard when parents are far away. Over time, they probably get used to it. We also considered it among the problems that we wanted to solve. But we realized we cannot solve it.”*

The community lawyers also came across extreme cases of children whose rights were not fulfilled, as an indirect consequence of the migration of the parents. As pointed out above, one of the original features of the project design was to target communities, including parents, as they are closely linked to the needs of the youth under their care and youth empowerment is directly relevant to their hopes for their children. The theory of change therefore rightly assumed parents to be accelerators for actions targeting youth. Parental support was an important prerequisite for the success of youth activities at outcome level, as stated in interviews with youth participants, parents, teachers and implementing partners. This assumption is undermined if parents are absent on a large scale.

In the southern regions, due to the outflow of young people and the working-age population in general, there is a serious concern about the demographic outfall, which the project did not fully take into account when selecting the age groups. In some areas, implementing partners had difficulty finding youth after school age, as they were gone already. When they realised that, from their target group (17-28 year olds), a significant part was mainly absent, the implementing partners had to re-adjust the target groups slightly, moving towards the 14-18 year olds. But this aspect was not evoked by the UN organisations staff interviewed.

**Quote (teacher)**

*“At the project start, we were told to focus on 14-28 year olds, but we just couldn't find young people of this age [beyond school age], they are not here. The few who are still here are very busy with work. There is almost no one younger than 28, only older. That's why we had to focus the project on schoolkids [which corresponds to 14-18 years old, note of the evaluation team].”*

While this aspect was not fully taken into account during project design, the empowerment of youth within their community by the project is relevant to the issue, as it may give the youth options at home. The local self-governments are acutely aware of this and formulate it as a need, hence their eagerness to invest in youth initiatives.

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<sup>41</sup> Murzakulova, Asel, Rural Migration in Kyrgyzstan: Drivers, Impact and Governance, University of Central Asia, MSRI Research paper # 7, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.35258.21442, June 2020, <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344362648\\_Rural\\_Migration\\_in\\_Kyrgyzstan\\_Drivers\\_Impact\\_and\\_Governance](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344362648_Rural_Migration_in_Kyrgyzstan_Drivers_Impact_and_Governance)> [12/12/2020]. See also: NOODU Study, the Ministry of Education and Science, 2017, Natsionalnoe ochenivanie obrazovatel'nix dostijeni uchashihsya, 2017. Ministerstvo obrazovaniya Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki.

<sup>42</sup> Peace Nexus Foundation, Conflict and Peace Analysis Kyrgyzstan, April 2019.

### Quote (mentor)

*“There was a story: one mother in Moscow was watching her own kid’s stream online, her son was very active. She started crying that her son is so accomplished and is conducting trainings already! Other parents felt like crying too! It was a very emotional moment.”*

**Finding 5:** Gender equality and empowerment of women was best targeted within the equity-focused approach of the project.

### Triangulated evidence basis

Project documents

Lists of participants disaggregated by gender

Interviews with youth, parents, CSOs, UN staff

The project was designed to address issues of equity (e.g. easier access to state services, targeting people from ethnic minorities for participation), which in turn would decrease discrimination. However, the rate of participants with Kyrgyzstani vs Uzbek ethnic background in the design phase is not documented and their views were not solicited specifically. Some groups remained harder to reach, for instance the youth who dropped out of school, because the project harnessed the schools as an existing network to identify participants. This issue was difficult to address for such a short project and was left aside in project documents. Now that mentors are established locally, they could be a new relay to reach out to this particularly vulnerable category in future interventions.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women is better documented, as a factor in the conflict analysis painted by the Peacebuilding Priority Plans, in the project document, and in the project’s monitoring documents (project reports, project financial and human statistics). However, the Peacebuilding Priority Plans and the project documents did not conduct a full-fledged gender analysis. They rather examined the role of radicalized women, or the particular human rights violations women are exposed to in the context of the conflict or in the targeted border areas. Yet, when planning activities and during implementation, particular attention was paid to gender transformative results which were never explicitly articulated. The gender distribution of participants shows that this principle was upheld throughout the project with a constant slight majority of women (between 50 and 60%).<sup>43</sup> Based on the project reports, for the UPSHIFT methodology, the total number of young people (13-17 year olds) recruited was 117 (53 male and 64 female), of which 97,4% successfully completed the programme. Project Output 1.1. involved 238 young people: 45% boys and 55% girls at the Leadership Innovation Academy, Make-Athon, UPSHIFT.<sup>44</sup> 30% of the total project budget was allocated to activities in direct pursuit of gender equality and women’s and human rights (e.g. legal clinics).

The relations between girls and boys, and girls’/women’s enjoyments of their human rights, were explicitly addressed in the project through workshops, training and other events with the youth. During group events, the mentors and the youth introduced gender roles as discussion topics. Mentors handled group dynamics where these roles were expected

<sup>43</sup> PBF Project Document, p. 2. Annual report 2019, p.3.: 60% are girls in presentation of the project to pilot communities. P.9: The project ensures gender equality by involving both boys and girls, young women and men in the project activities, starting from the selection of project participants, as well as the participation of girls with ethnic minority groups and from the religious families.

<sup>44</sup> Project progress report, June 2020.

to transform. For example, Forum Theatre aimed to address early marriage and women and girls' education. That was particularly relevant to the youth: the 30 UPSHIFT teams identified early marriage, and girls' restricted by their parents from accessing education, among the priority issues in their communities.

**Quote (young person, female)**

*"I also don't like the idea that girls don't need education and must stay home. I see this happening often in my circle, in my village. Thank God, my parents are not against my education, they support me. But some girls are told 'Why do you need education; you'll get married anyway'. For instance, my neighbour got married without education, she got married right after returning from Russia. So, I think her life got stolen. I think she could live her own life, rather than getting married so early (she is 19 years old). She could have found her own goals, her own meanings. She will stay home now, as a married woman. I don't think this is a life, this is something strange."*

**Quote (youth participant, male)**

*"Topics were about social issues, and about girls' issues. So much is about boys in society. We also had topics on roles of youth and others that were raised by girls."*

*In the border and remote communities, parents sometimes had concerns about their daughters' safety if they participated in the project activities. The project successfully overcame this by gaining the trust of the parents, by involving them in project activities and keeping them informed in general. Many parents supported the involvement of their daughters in the project activities from the start.*

**Quote (father)**

*"I want her to be able to do everything on her own, take care of herself in life. To be able to talk to different people. That is why parents need to send their kids to school, whether it is a boy or a girl"*

**Evaluation question 2: To what extent is the project based on a logical Theory of Change and how coherent was it in practice?**

**Key Findings:**

**Finding 6:** The project design was based on conflict analysis and PBF expertise.

**Finding 7:** The actual theory of change was internally coherent, but its formal expression in the project documents required adjustments.

**Finding 8:** The shift to online activities due to COVID-19-related prevention measures was handled swiftly, presenting constraints but also unexpected opportunities.

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**Finding 6:** The project design was based on conflict analysis and PBF expertise.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Documents review: PBF reports, PBSO priority plans, academic papers on conflict analysis and Kyrgyz borders, United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), and following publications

Project documents

Interviews with UN staff

The theory of change was consistent with the strategic approach of the Peacebuilding Fund to conflict transformation. In addition to incorporating key documents such as the Peacebuilding Priorities, the project design phase involved the staff of the PBF through consultations, inputs and commentaries to the project document. As a result, the project document was largely in alignment with PBSO priorities.

Conflict analysis was mostly embodied by the United Nations Peacebuilding Priority Plans, backed up by a corpus of publications, many of which are referenced on the website of the PBF. However, it should be noted that, while conflict is highly dynamic and volatile, the Peacebuilding Priority Plans (now terminated) were prepared every four years. It is therefore highly plausible that some details of this conflict analysis could be outdated, or would require additional details to acknowledge new developments. Yet, the PBF does not offer any tool to support closer conflict monitoring, ongoing analysis, and their integration in project design, monitoring and adjustment. Neither is there any mechanism that would facilitate exchange of experience in matching the experiences of several recipients facing similar conflict situations or implementing comparable peacebuilding initiatives. There is great potential in equipping the recipients of the PBF with dynamic tools.

The 2013-2016 UN Peacebuilding Priority Plan for Kyrgyzstan identifies the root causes of conflict, and the conflict risks, as lack of trust between different groups of people (often along ethnic lines); increased segregation and estrangement of ethnic communities in some areas directly affected by the violent conflict in June 2010; lack of justice; and the memories of the 2010 and 1990 conflicts; a sense of human insecurity and violation of rights exacerbating stereotypes, nationalism, inequality and discrimination; inadequate legislation and partial implementation of laws and policies; lack of respect for the rule of law and lack of accountability.<sup>45</sup> The 2013-2016 UN Peacebuilding Priority Plan for Kyrgyzstan therefore selected the following top intervention areas for peacebuilding: (1) Human Rights and Rule of Law, (2) Strengthening of Local Self-Government bodies, and (3) Support to the development of a common civic identity, multilingual education and respect for diversity and minority rights.<sup>46</sup> The project clearly corresponds to points (2) and (3).

A 2017 survey about drivers of conflict identified four threats to peace in Kyrgyzstan: youth unemployment, non-demarcated boundaries, corruption and radicalization. A large majority also cited social fracture due to migration, lack of basic infrastructure and education/social services.<sup>47</sup> Youth unemployment and exclusion, as well as an increased attention to violent extremism, were put in focus for future Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative projects at the close of the 2013-2016 UN Peacebuilding Priority Plan. Its successor, the 2018-2020 UN Peacebuilding Priority Plan, set in its continuity, provides the background of the project

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<sup>45</sup> UN Peacebuilding Priority Plan Kyrgyzstan (2013-2016), <<https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/en/31253-peacebuilding-priority-plan-ppp>> [13/10/2020], pp. 2-3.

<sup>46</sup> UN Peacebuilding / Katinka Patscher-Hellbeck, Strategic Peacebuilding Review. PBF Portfolio in Kyrgyzstan 2018-2020, July 2020, p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Jantzi, Terrence, Fernanda Faria, and Anara Alymkulova, Evaluation of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Project Portfolio In Kyrgyzstan, Evaluation Report, 31 August 2017, <<http://kg.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/kyrgyzstan/docs/General/UNPBF%20Kyrgyzstan%20ER%20Final%20-%2031%20August%202017.pdf>> [29/12/2020], p. 40.

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evaluated here. This Plan identifies root causes and long-term challenges as (1) weak governance and rule of law, and risks of human rights violations, (2) marginalisation and isolation of certain populations, and (3) understanding of religious diversity.

The project addresses these root causes on multiple levels: by increasing trust and interethnic interactions and collaborations; by targeting communities in the areas which experienced the 2010 conflict; through access to, and capacity of, justice and legal aid as well as other state services; by enhancing critical thinking and youth participation in local decision making. Another point of conflict analysis, based on the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border conflicts, is that militarization of the borders increases tensions.<sup>48</sup> This was addressed at input level with capacity building of law enforcement and border management, aiming at enhanced access to rights on results level, for an ultimate progress towards conflict settlement on purpose level of the theory of change. All these aspects are an integral part of human security, defined as freedom from want and from fear<sup>49</sup>.

The project's intended results (youth empowerment through employment and inclusion) and impacts (economic and social stability) are well recognised as vehicles of peacebuilding in conflict theory.<sup>50</sup> The theory of change assumes that youth are instrumental in conflict dynamics, because they can either build peace, or on the contrary be instrumentalized for conflict, as was witnessed during the 2010 events. The theory of change also assumes that youth have vested interests and a propensity to support peaceful relations within their community and between communities: in essence, youth tend to want peace because young people are affected by conflict in life-cycle specific ways, with short-, medium- and long-term effects ranging from repeat victimization to psychological trauma, identity-based discrimination, and social and economic exclusion. In general conflict analysis, their agency for peace is at risk of being ignored.<sup>51</sup> Conflict tends to disproportionately affect their human rights, and so they aspire to conflict resolution. These assumptions are strongly backed up by state-of-the-art research, analysis and reporting.<sup>52</sup>

The youth's potential to act as agents of change is another important assumption of the project – but in itself, it presupposes readiness, ability and willingness from both the youth and their surrounding actors. UN document recognises their capacity to mobilize their peers and other community members and to understand local dynamics and priorities that might be easily overlooked by others involved in peacebuilding.<sup>53</sup> The project built on this recognition to boost it through project activities.

The fourth assumption in the theory of change is least evident, and the project design rightly took existing analysis one step further: whereas the Peace Nexus Conflict and Peace Analysis Kyrgyzstan identifies parents and teachers as possible barriers to youth inclusion and participation, especially for young women, and recommends promoting dialogue with parents (amongst others),<sup>54</sup> the theory of change of the project counted

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<sup>48</sup> Murzakulova, Asel, Contextual Factors of conflict in Border Communities in Batken Province, Kyrgyzstan, Technical Report, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.24353.024, September 2017 <[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320014772\\_Contextual\\_Factors\\_of\\_conflict\\_in\\_Border\\_Communities\\_in\\_Batken\\_Province\\_Kyrgyzstan](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320014772_Contextual_Factors_of_conflict_in_Border_Communities_in_Batken_Province_Kyrgyzstan)> [12/12/2020], pp. 17-18.

<sup>49</sup> Commission on Human Security (2003), Human Security Now, New York, quoted in UN Peacebuilding Priority Plan Kyrgyzstan (2013-2016), <<https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/en/31253-peacebuilding-priority-plan-ppp>> [13/10/2020], p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> UNSCR 2250 (2015) and UNSCR 2419 (2018); UN Peacebuilding Priority Plan Kyrgyzstan (both iterations: 2013-2016 and 2017-2020), <<https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/en/31253-peacebuilding-priority-plan-ppp>> [13/10/2020]; Peace nexus, Conflict and Peace Analysis, Kyrgyzstan, April 2019, p. 44: High unemployment & few economic opportunities as drivers for conflict; Jantzi, Terrence, Fernanda Faria, and Anara Alymkulova, Evaluation of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Project Portfolio In Kyrgyzstan, Evaluation Report, 31 August 2017, <<http://kg.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/kyrgyzstan/docs/General/UNPBF%20Kyrgyzstan%20ER%20Final%20-%2031%20August%202017.pdf>> [29/12/2020], p. X.

<sup>51</sup> "Youth resilience for peace", General Assembly Security Council, 72nd session, agenda item 65, Peacebuilding and sustainable peace, 02/03/2018, p. 2-11.

<sup>52</sup> "Youth resilience for peace", General Assembly Security Council, 72nd session, agenda item 65, Peacebuilding and sustainable peace, 02/03/2018, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> "Youth resilience for peace", General Assembly Security Council, 72nd session, agenda item 65, Peacebuilding and sustainable peace, 02/03/2018, p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> Peace Nexus Foundation, Conflict and Peace Analysis Kyrgyzstan, April 2019, pp. 6, 7, and 10; also: inter-generational gap as a source of conflict, p. 36.



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on parents and teachers as accelerators in a positive process. This is remarkable, as the idea is not particularly prominent in existing literature but was instrumental for the project: the involvement of teachers and parents had merely been mentioned as adding to sustainability,<sup>55</sup> but their involvement in practice (parenting trainings, participation in consultations and events, support of youth at home and in public) was in some cases a necessary condition for participation of youth, and certainly essential at least up to results level if not beyond.

The link between youth empowerment and peacebuilding, which backs up the intended impact of the project, is therefore largely treated in pre-existing conflict theory, and explicitly considered through fundamental assumptions at relevance level of the theory of change, as well as on the impact and purpose levels.

The middle layer of the theory of change (results levels) is less grounded in conflict theory. Accompanying stakeholders from youth empowerment activities to peacebuilding is a “long shot”: in the field, this link can seem more tenuous or theoretical, which is fully recognized by conflict theory. The theory of change of the project seeks to transfer a theoretical approach to peacebuilding into practice, by investing in the youth through multiple activities focused on many different aspects of the communities’ life. These activities try to establish an indirect link between the youth’s (and communities’) multiple needs on the ground, and peacebuilding theory. The multiplicity of these needs partly accounts for the broad spectrum of the project.

Finally, the project activities, being very varied and modular (they could be assembled in a different way in each location), enabled the team to adapt to the different conflict factors and to the varying relations among communities in each location.

**Finding 7:** The actual theory of change was internally coherent, but its formal expression in the project documents required adjustments.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Annual project reports

Interviews with UN staff

The project’s theory of change was internally coherent: the chain of causality is logical and rooted in conflict analysis and peacebuilding theory, and well suited to the target areas of implementation. In practice, a rebalancing of activities and an adjustment of the monitoring and evaluation framework took place during the implementation, notably regarding interethnic relations vs. cross-border focus. During the monitoring and evaluation workshops organised in October and November by UNICEF Osh and the Peacebuilding Fund, the recipient UN organisations, and later their implementing partners, matched more strongly the theory of change with the implementation framework and adjusted the indicators.<sup>56</sup> They unpacked the links between the levels of the theory of change, and between the project components, they agreed on terminology, and verified their common understanding of intermediate and strategic outcomes. They were therefore able to better reflect the actual peacebuilding approach – i.e. interethnic relations rather than cross-border – while adjusting inputs to the theory of change, for instance by fleshing out cross-border interactions. This ensured a shared understanding of the indicators and led to a clear

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<sup>55</sup> Annex “additional findings on effectiveness and sustainability”, p. ii, in: de Weijer, Frauke / PeaceNexus Foundation, Review of PBF Cross-Border Cooperation for Sustainable Peace and Development in the Border Area of Kyrgyzstan & Tajikistan, 20-11-2017.

<sup>56</sup> Monitoring frame developed as a result of the monitoring and evaluation workshops, Annual report 2019, pp. 8 and 9.

monitoring plan, thereby securing effective coordination and reporting: the project partly overcame the original dilemma between cross-border and interethnic approaches.<sup>57</sup>

#### Quotes (UN staff members)

*“The original intention was to include participants from Uzbekistan. We discussed it with the other UN agencies and with the implementing partners. We knew we had to achieve the goals set in the monitoring framework [...]. So, we organised a monitoring and evaluation meeting with our implementing partners [...]. There, we unpacked the theory of change to find better linkages to the outcome indicators. As a result, we put more realistic indicators. As a result, the monitoring and evaluation framework was adjusted.”*

*“It’s difficult to maintain accountability towards the PBF, the UN in general, beneficiaries, the Government – all with different visions. The monitoring and evaluation workshop helped with that. What is sellable to the Ministry of Foreign affairs in the government is not sellable to the donor, and vice versa.”*

From that point, project monitoring reports flow more logically, use a more direct language, and are easier to read. Having composed of different expectations at the beginning, the project staff realised the weaknesses in the project design when confronted with reality, and they had the courage to adapt – with success. This process created a useful positive experience: interviewees who took part in this process were well equipped to reflect on the project, explain causalities and voice opinions. This exercise further rendered the project resilient in the face of crisis: equipped with common understanding, the UN staff and implementing partners and adapted well to the COVID-19 crisis.

**Finding 8:** The shift to online activities due to COVID-19-related prevention measures was handled swiftly, presenting constraints but also unexpected opportunities.

#### Triangulated evidence basis

Project reports

Interviews with implementing partners and UN staff

Interviews with mentors

Social media analysis

The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown measures obviously complicated the project implementation. However, the pandemic did not directly influence any of the key assumptions of the theory of change, nor did it make the chain of change less relevant or less coherent. The lockdown measures slowed activities down and prevented timely completion of the project within the planned timeframe, leading to a no-cost extension of six months until Mid-November 2020, approved by the donor.

This transformation represented a constraint for all. The UPSHIFT programme swiftly went online and 34 (70% girls) participants from seven locations joined it. To support young people under quarantine regime and help overcome their difficulties with remote schooling/study, the project delivered online live consultations with a psychologist for 949

<sup>57</sup> Annual report 2019, p. 3.

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young people. The COVID-19 pandemic risked increasing inequalities linked to internet access, leaving unconnected youth invisible and off the grid. A shift to online activities implies connectivity (device, internet access/network coverage) as necessary (but not sufficient) condition, on top of “usual” constraints (time, work, that is to say at risk of increasing the gender gap). For example, the participants sometimes had limited access to internet, or lacked literacy with online communication tools. The implementing partners responded with individual advice, and by topping up the participants’ balance on their mobile phones, and/or providing mobile phones to those most in need.

The shift from in-person activities to online participation also accentuated the predominance of activities aiming at civic participation and prosperity, rather than interethnic interactions, as this component of the project was strongly based on common experiences and team compositions.

At the same time, these circumstances pushed the project teams to explore new ways to reach the participants, which created new opportunities:

- more contact with the Youth Agency from Uzbekistan to conduct online activities, such as the Youth Peace Dialogue online forum including an online Youth diplomacy week;
- exposing the youth’s potential to operate a general digital shift, thereby enhancing their status in their community. This was visible in the social media activity of participants;
- highlighting the need for digital infrastructure: the project showed that the local self-governments responded well when told about the needs of the young people and of the community. Some provided premises (e.g. in Aidarken for co-working centre) and material to the participants;
- possibility to reach more participants online than offline. Provided there is internet access and online interaction is perceived as safer than travel, online participation also potentially eases access for hard-to-reach groups (such as remote communities or girls from traditional families) and/or people who are not comfortable with in-person participation (or whose parents are apprehensive of in-person events).

## 5.2 Effectiveness

**Evaluation question 3: To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on the output level?**

### Key Findings:

**Finding 9:** There is conclusive evidence of youth empowerment created by the project, which was an unexpected and new experience for all involved.

**Finding 10:** There is anecdotal evidence of progress regarding the interethnic component. Self-censorship is symptomatic of conflict structure.

**Finding 11:** A large share of girls participated in the project activities, and the transformative results of the activities are particularly visible for them.

**Finding 12:** Success stories emerged from the project activities where municipalities supported youth initiatives.

**Finding 13:** The pilots projects concerning service delivery in municipalities were well received, but they remain modest and scattered.

**Finding 14:** National level duty bearers and their regional level representation became better connected with the final beneficiaries’ aspirations and realities.

**Finding 9:** There is conclusive evidence of youth empowerment created by the project, which was an unexpected and new experience for all involved.

#### Triangulated evidence basis

Interviews with youth participants, parents, teachers, mentors, municipal authorities and leaders, IPs, duty bearers, UN staff

Focus group discussion with implementing partners

Project documents, Youth of Osh quarterly report

Social media output and media coverage of the project

As anticipated by the theory of change, youth empowerment-related results were achieved with a significant proportion of participants who became influencers, civic activists or entrepreneurs and upheld a spirit of friendship with their peers from various backgrounds. All interviewees talk about the change they personally experienced (youth, mentors, parents) or observed (municipalities staff, local and national duty bearers). Shining examples may serve as models and open perspectives. Youth and duty bearers alike talk about new initiatives, led by the youth, towards the enjoyment of their rights. However, these changes are unlikely to have reached a critical mass towards wider, regional transformations.

More than 90 young people participated in the offline UPSHIFT programme and were supported by mentors to use new skills and perspectives to identify local issues (2019). The new online UPSHIFT programme in June 2020 formed 18 teams in all nine project locations with 56 new project participants. Participants learned about and practiced leadership, tolerance and civic activism and empathy. 30 youth-led initiatives were developed based on the results of their own research determining the needs and requirements in their communities, developing social or business initiatives over the course of three months.

As for the LIA, 90 young people and 7 mentors participated (60% female, 40% male). The LIA consisted of several stages, from capacity building workshops to participative community needs assessments, and data analysis and visualisation data. 600 people (village heads of villages, heads and representatives of local self-government bodies, deputies of the local and city councils, youth, teachers) then participated at the public hearing events for needs assessments in the nine target locations. Finally, online trainings, video lessons and a Makeathon focused on developing social entrepreneurship projects. As a result, nine youth initiative groups presented the small initiatives they had developed to nine local self-government representatives, business and education experts.

For young people this was a personal transformation, an initiation into a world of adults and new possibilities. This change was particularly perceptible among usually withdrawn young people. Interestingly, the project did not so much identify existing leaders among the youth to make them even more visible or prominent: it rather released the potential of understated personalities, who became more self-confident. This strongly contributes to the participants' capacity to enjoy their right to "freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (Art. 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, social and cultural rights).

#### Quote (school director)

*„What I really appreciated and what warmed my heart is that some shy, reticent, timid kids had their motivation, leadership ignited.“*

### Quote (youth)

*"I can say that I have found myself because of this project. I understood what my interests were. My self-esteem got higher. I have new goals and new dreams. My big goal is now marketing, I want to study it."*

The figures show the youth's increased agency: 70% of the youth-led initiatives in the project aimed at supporting the implementation of plans for cooperation and/or local development. Youth initiatives show empowerment beyond the scope of the project activities and the participants' capability to undertake initiatives and transpose and use the skills learned during the project without waiting. For example, a youth team searched for other funding sources for their project, in case they would not get funding within the UN project. They wanted to be able to go through with their idea in any case, as they saw the relevance of their action. Others organised a petition to obtain internet coverage of their village and appealed to telecom companies, for the community to better enjoy its right to access, what is now a basic commodity. While initiating these projects, the youth learned to adapt their behaviour to their counterparts and context. This in turn led the youth to perceive themselves, and community members to recognize them, as peer members of the community who can and do bring an added value. Individual stories of realization changed the perception of youth among their peers and within their community, generating mutual respect. Mutual respect, be it among ethnicities, but also more generally, coincide with the impact level of the theory of change, in terms of inclusive dialogue and social stability. Being respected and owing respect to others were new experiences.

Local self-governments and youth started discerning common interests and opportunities. Local authorities did not expect that young people could initiate and implement projects that benefit local communities. Interviewed local self-government representative were impressed by the realisation of the initiatives and by the benefits that youth can bring. They were eager to receive more support for their youth, in terms of local initiatives and cross-border opportunities. Most of all, local self-governments are acutely aware that their youth may choose to emigrate to Russia as soon as they finish school and any perspective at home might prevent that.

### Quotes (youth)

*"Teachers and fellow-villagers started treating us like adults. They discuss with us how problems can be solved. They treat us like peers. We learnt to talk to local village councillors. We requested them to make the local budget transparent. They didn't reject it and followed our advice."*

### Quotes (mentor)

*"The youth learnt to interact with local governments, school principal – before the project, they would just come to school and leave. And now they were approaching authorities with requests. They started behaving reliably."*

*"These girls become respected, people respect them. They become an example for others. They received gratitude letters from the mayor's office. They get lots of accolades."*



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The project also connected the young participants with one another, and, as some put it “with the world out there”. Acquiring a wider social network and gaining exposure to different environments also formed part of the young participants’ initiation experience. The interviewees appreciated this widening of horizon and building of bonds.

**Quotes (school directors)**

*“The teenagers went to Nookan, Osh, other places with the project. They made friends. They realized they can develop their community on their own. They have many ideas now. They say: ‘We should have done this, or this’. They have seen projects of other villages. There is development in children. They were isolated here, in the village, so they went out.”*

*“When they went to Kochkor-Ata, the youth saw a different world – it was very clean, neat, nice, food was good – do you think their parents take them to such places?”*

For parents, the project activities brought reconceptualization of parent-child relationship and renewed their view of their own children as capable members of the community. The 78 parents who, in all nine locations, joined the parenting workshop within LIA on adolescent psychology and parent-child communication children. Involving parents was also important for the parents to acknowledge their children’s success and grow closer to them. The parents interviewed confirmed that they were proud and at the same times surprised to find out that their children could speak up, generate ideas and contribute to the development of their communities. Project staff reports that not all parents gave their support, but all whom they convinced to come and pay attention, were impressed and more supportive in the end. Thus, the project succeeded in establishing communication bridges between the young people and their parents (though the issues of migration of parents, especially from the border communities still remain to be addressed.)

**Quote (parent)**

*“I see changes in my son, in his behaviour. He started having interests. “Mom, if I do this, that can work out,” he says. Before this, he would just go to school and come back. But now we talk more of his ideas, he sets goals. That brought lot of joy for us.”*

Among communities, more than 600 residents across all nine target locations gathered at various public hearings to get acquainted with the activities of the young people who had identified local community problems and suggested ways to solve them. When teachers mention the concrete competencies acquired by their students (leadership, analytical thinking, legal, media literacy, conflict management and teambuilding skills / including under the aspect of gender), they are overwhelmingly positively surprised, and this often coincides with the most significant change interviewees identify.

### Quote (youth participant)

*"We [participants on the project] became like 'authorities' (someone who is respected by others) at school. Teachers now see that we can achieve own goals."*

*"People started treating me differently in the village. When I greeted someone, they praised me for the trees [we planted as part of our initiative]. I was surprised people recognized me and knew about our trees. I'm glad I became useful for my community, that I brought some benefit to people."*

### Quote (teacher)

*"Frankly, we didn't expect much from the kids. But they tried so much to do their best for the village."*

National duty bearers, in particular the Youth Agency through their local branches, followed but did not lead the process. According to interviews, this is connected to the remoteness of the targeted locations and lack of resources for salaries and travel.



### Human Interest Story: Mirlan Ubraim uulu

Despite his young age, 25-year-old Mirlan Ubraim uulu has the diverse background of a migrant worker, a healthcare professional, a certified teacher and a young leader in Kerben town of Jalal-Abad province, Kyrgyzstan.

Mirlan is grateful that he had the chance to be a mentor for "Friendship has no Limits" project implemented in his community from 2019 to 2020 by UN agencies and partner organisations. He is also a Chairman of the Youth Committee of Kerben town, which was established in 2019. Mirlan interacted with international organization such as UNICEF and civil society organisations like "Youth of Osh" for the first time.

The project "Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan" (non-official title "Friendship has no Limits") was implemented in the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border communities of the Kyrgyz Republic from January 2019 to November 2020. The project was carried out jointly by UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP. The project was funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and aimed at supporting the national government, local self-governments and youth in their efforts to establish and promote youth cohesion and positive interactions in border areas with further catalytic effects for the entire country. All project activities took place in Kyrgyzstan

with some activities involving youth and authorities from Uzbekistan. Activities were conducted at national level, and local level namely, in the provinces of Osh (Kara-Suu, Kashkar-Kyshtak, Tepe-Korgon), Jalalabad (Kerben, Kashka-Suu, Kok-Serek) and Batken (Aidarken, Birlik, Suu-Bashy).

Kerben, where Mirlan lives, is a small remote town in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan with a population of less than 15 000 people. The town was selected at the initial project site selections stage due to a high percentage of labour migrants and of unemployed youth, and the openness of the local authorities and youth leaders.

Mirlan has been inspired by the youth work done as a mentor in the project. He says that he has changed and become more open, ambitious and with a clear vision of his future.

Mirlan graduated from the Medical College of Osh State University in 2016 as a paramedic. After graduation he returned to his hometown to start his career in healthcare. But his first experience crashed against the reality of everyday life in a remote community. Even though he had graduated with distinction, he was not welcomed as a young professional and faced different constraints.

While at College, as a promising student he was recommended to continue his medical studies in the Russian Federation. But his decision to return to his home community was dictated by the fact that his family was facing financial constraints and was not able to support his further studies. Instead of pursuing education, Mirlan decided to migrate to Russia as labourer in 2016, following the general trend in communities like his. In 2017, he returned and continued to study at the higher education level at the Jalal-Abad State University. He graduated in 2020 with the diploma of a biology teacher.

Currently he combines professional development working as a half-time paramedic at the local healthcare unit, and voluntary activity leading the Youth Committee. He is most inspired by the work with the youth. As project mentor he supervised 15 young people during the project: seven boys, eight girls. Since he is a trained teacher, he thought that he knew how to interact with young people. The project invested in his practical skills of effectively working with adolescents, rather as a peer, to better understand their needs, to have fun and satisfaction of this interaction. Mirlan says *“Mentors work is very important as we need to inspire youth and motivate them. Unfortunately, the young people have no place to get this motivation. Most of the teachers in the rural areas have limited skills to positively interact with young people. Teachers instruct kids and tell them what to do. But this way we fail to discover kids’ potential or their leadership. A mentor is different: he tries to enter the inner world of kids, understand what they are going through and open up their potential.”* The young people under his mentorship were from different backgrounds: some of the kids were from vulnerable families, when one or both parents were in Russia as labour migrants *“...and when you give encouragement, they open up”* he points out.

His mentoring goes beyond the project, now he utilises the new skills he acquired in everyday life “mentoring” his family members, friends, community members: *“I try to motivate people, especially when there are real tangible immediate results. I have clearer goals now”* he says.

He is planning to take classes in one of the local schools to keep interacting with young people. Most importantly he is inspired by the training provided within the UPSHIFT project and how he was able to support the young people: *“I am very proud of the progress these kids have made,”* he says.

According to Mirlan, there are still very remote communities in the mountains in the region where he lives. Young people are at a disadvantage there, especially girls and young women. Neglect, abuse, including sexual abuse, no access to development opportunities, deteriorating infrastructure are among numerous problems there. *“There is no bright future for us unless we start investing in our youth. Now the youth work is more important to me,”* concludes Mirlan.

Mirlan looks favourably upon the idea of the project of positive interaction with the youth across the border. He maintains contact with the youth leaders from Jangi Korgon region of Uzbekistan and even developed further plans with them such as conducting a camp with the youth from Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in 2021, ensuring funds from the Mayor’s office for this.

**Finding 10:** There is anecdotal evidence of progress regarding the interethnic component, though interviewees’ self-censorship is symptomatic of conflict structure.

#### Triangulated evidence basis

Interviews with youth participants, parents, teachers, mentors, municipal authorities and leaders, IP/CSOs, duty bearers, UN staff

Focus group discussion with implementing partners

Social media output and media coverage of the project

UNFPA quarter 2 report, YoO quarterly report 2

When assessing the progress of the project’s interethnic component, the disparate interethnic situation in three targeted provinces should not be overlooked. According to the 2019 official statistical data,<sup>58</sup> the majority of the Batken province are Kyrgyz (77%), with Uzbek (15%) and Tajik (7%) minorities. Batken also hosts all six enclaves of the Kyrgyz Republic. Moreover, Batken province has not experienced interethnic conflicts such as Osh and Jalal-Abad in 2010. On the contrary, Osh city and Osh province in general have a higher percentage of ethnically Uzbek population, compared to the two other southern provinces. In 2019,<sup>59</sup> the city of Osh had 43% of ethnically Uzbek and 51% of ethnically Kyrgyz population. Moreover, Osh city was the epicentre of the 2010 ethnic conflict. Jalal-Abad province had 72% Kyrgyz and 36% Uzbek population in 2019.<sup>60</sup> Some researchers suggest Osh and Jalal-Abad were the focal points of the 2010 ethnic clashes because of high rates of internal migration of rural residents (and the consequent change in the demographic structure) and weaker vertical and horizontal ties between local elites and

<sup>58</sup> <<http://stat.kg/ru/publications/demograficheskij-ezhegodnik-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/>> [13/01/2021].

<sup>59</sup> <<http://stat.kg/ru/publications/demograficheskij-ezhegodnik-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/>> [13/01/2021].

<sup>60</sup> <<http://stat.kg/ru/publications/demograficheskij-ezhegodnik-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki/>> [13/01/2021].

activists.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the conflict potential of major settlements varies between the three southern provinces, as does their interethnic situation at the project onset. This makes the assessment of the progress of the project's interethnic component rather context-specific for each location.

Interethnic and cross-border youth interaction, as planned at the result level of the theory of change, was achieved. 30% of the youth-led initiatives in the project aimed at supporting diversity and equality, involving interethnic cooperation within Kyrgyzstan. As long as the activities took place in person, these interactions were part of the experience for the youth. Interethnic interactions were brought about by thematic activities, but also through group compositions. Some project participants missed the interethnic component among the project goals, some on the contrary commented on it, seeing the intention but not identifying it as relevant – and nevertheless confirming the personal link established and/or change in attitude. When they mentioned ethnic diversity, interviewed youth and parents displayed a newly supportive attitude. This may be due to social desirability bias and the cultural norm not to speak negatively of others,<sup>62</sup> or that the peacebuilding component was delivered in a language that was less theoretical – friendship, accepting “otherness”, tolerance, etc. Actual accounts of the interethnic climate can be gleaned through implicit perceptions of interviewees. A panel of quotes shows the project achieved effective change in perceptions, attitudes, and even values professed by interviewees, at least at individual level.

#### Quotes (youth, majority group)

*“The project was around friendship between youth of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. It probably hasn't achieved 100%, but it will in the future. It is better for us to be in good relations with Uzbek people. We are a border community, so there are people of different ethnicities. After the trainings we also explained to people at school that having arguments based on ethnicity is wrong.”*

*[the main project outcome was] “... that I became friends with students of other schools, I started talking often because of the project. There were Tadjik and Kyrgyz teenagers. Under other circumstances, I wouldn't have befriended them.”*

*“I used to think that other ethnicities are worse than us, I am sorry for this. But I changed my view. I realised we all have our own norms. Because I became friends with one girl from another school, and she told me about their rules in their ethnic group [...]. And then I realized I was absolutely wrong.”*

*“Our town is multi-ethnic. The project aimed at strengthening Kyrgyz and Uzbek relations. When I had arguments with my Tadjik friends, I used to say things like ‘Go and live in your own country, what are you doing here!’. But then I realized that they are also citizens of Kyrgyzstan, just like I am. [...] After the project my attitude to people changed.”*

*“The project helped to improve relations between people. Before it we thought that we cannot be friends with Tadjik people. But then we realized we can talk to each other.”*

<sup>61</sup> Megoran, Nick, John Heathershaw and Alisher Khamidov, *Bottom-up Peacekeeping in Southern Kyrgyzstan: How Local Actors Managed to Prevent the Spread of Violence from Osh/Jalal-Abad to Aravan*, June 2010, Nationalities Papers, Routledge, 2017 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2017.1335695>>.

<sup>62</sup> Tendency of interviewees or respondents to give responses that they believe to be socially approved rather than those that reflect their actual behaviour or thoughts.



Quote (youth, minority background)

*„I thought ‘Everyone is Kyrgyz here, will they separate us?’ But then I got used to it.”*

Parents who expressed positive reaction towards interethnic friendships their children had developed within the project were mostly of minority ethnic background. Feedback of parents of majority ethnic background had more reserved, albeit with positive tone.

Quote (parent, minority ethnic group)

*“There is some tension between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz people in the country. It’s good if children speak Kyrgyz and Uzbek and become friends with each other. Now my son has friends from different ethnic groups – how would he find them without such a project?”*

Quote (parent, majority group)

*“Teenagers started to get to know Uzbek people in our village, to better understand their interests, in foreign languages and other things. They were sharing views and getting to know many new people.”*

With the shift to online activities, the building of close bonds among youth from different backgrounds who didn’t know each other before could hardly be achieved anymore, especially within the given timeframe. As to cross-border youth interactions at local level, there were joint activities where youth from Uzbekistan was invited, but those did not take place due to COVID-19-related restrictions. Young people’s small projects and empowerment cast the ethnic composition of young people’s groups into the shade.

Cross-border activities were significantly less sizeable: the volume of grassroots-level cross-border activities is insufficient to result in a critical size of stakeholders having experienced positive cross-border interaction. Yet, some online events specifically enabled cross-border interactions.

**Finding 11:** A large share of girls participated in the project activities, and the transformative results of the activities are particularly visible for them.

Triangulated evidence basis

Project documents

Focus group with implementing partners

Interviews with youth participants, parents, teachers, mentors, local self-governments, CSOs

The expected result of the theory of change (youth empowered as peace-making influencers, civic activists and entrepreneurs) was especially impressive concerning female participants, as leadership and participation in decision making is not part of their traditional gender role. Besides, as presented in finding 4, labour migration is an issue for

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the border communities. Male school graduates tend to leave their community looking for jobs in other regions within the country or abroad. Girls tend to stay longer in studies, but this doesn't always materialise in women having more gainful employment (in the best case they work in public service, e.g. as teachers). Targeting female participants was therefore particularly important for the theory of change of the project.

As noted in finding 5, the share of the girls who participated in the project was well balanced. For example, the share of the girls who successfully completed the UPSHIFT programme and were awarded certificates by UNICEF, Youth of Osh and Accelerate Prosperity was the following:

- from Batken province 39 participants- 53.8% (girls), 46.2% (boys),
- from Osh province 37 participants- 48.6% (girls), 51.4% (boys),
- from Jalal-Abad province 38 participants- 57.9% (girls), 42.1% (boys).

As for the LIA, 90 young participants were part of this activity and 7 mentors (total 97):

- from Batken province 35 participants – 63% (girls), 37 % (boys)
- from Osh province 31 participants – 52% (girls), 48% (boys)
- from Jalal-Abad province 34 participants – 53% (girls), 47% (boys)

The project made a point to engage young Kyrgyzstani women of Uzbek ethnic background, but their participation was variable and will need further attention regarding obstacles. Unfortunately, the project team did not systematically monitor the ethnic composition of the groups for each activity (unlike the gender balance in general): it was therefore not possible for the evaluation team to quantitatively assess the level of inclusion of girls from ethnic minorities in the activities. Ethnic inclusion is mostly relayed by participants' impressions. They report that vulnerable groups such as Kyrgyzstani of Uzbek ethnic background, particularly girls, although targeted by the project, had more difficulties in participating: some Uzbek children were not allowed by their parents to participate, who reportedly felt too unsafe. The evaluation team unfortunately did not succeed to interview these parents to understand their rationale. This also brings up the issue of (self-)exclusion and access to opportunities for Kyrgyz citizens belonging to ethnic minorities in the border areas, especially youth. Restrictions may be even tighter for girls of Uzbek ethnic background. Some studies demonstrate that one of the coping strategies of ethnic Uzbek families after the 2010 clashes was stretching previously endogamous marriage pattern to a wider Uzbek ethnic group and hurried arranged marriages of young girls.<sup>63</sup> This was pointed out by youth participants themselves, which shows a certain degree of awareness on the subject as well as a readiness to talk about it openly. It is particularly interesting to observe that youth participants who could access the project were sensitive to the fact that others could not. This empathy probably predates the project.

**Quote (youth participant, Kyrgyz ethnic background)**

*"The purpose of the project was to strengthen friendship between two ethnicities. But unfortunately only Kyrgyz participants ended up participating. We were also upset and called over the phone to Uzbek participants to persuade their parents. But their parents didn't allow it. Our second team proposed a project on Uzbek-Kyrgyz friendship, unfortunately it was not supported."*

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<sup>63</sup> Ismailbekova, Aksana, From Endogamous Marriage to Ethnicity: Uzbek Community Survival Strategy After the 2010 Conflict in Osh, *Anthropology & Archeology of Eurasia* 58:3 (2019), pp. 134-154.

Quote (youth participant, male)

*“There were 5 girls and 5 boys at the beginning, then by the end of the project we had 3 girls and 7 boys, since parents were prohibiting girls from participating.”*

Quote (teacher)

*“In Kara-Suu girls are not allowed to participate in outside events. I talked to mothers, then fathers, then grandparents. It’s good that I speak Uzbek language.”*

Quote (teacher)

*“ Because after the 2010,<sup>64</sup> parents are still concerned about the safety [of their children]. They also wonder whether their daughter will be able to get married if she gets education. I convinced them that even if she gets married, being educated is an advantage, as she will help her own children.”*

The young people went for the training outside of their villages and regions to Osh, Kochkor-Ata, Jalal-Abad, which implied overnight stays outside of their homes. Getting permission for girls from their parents was an extra effort for the implementing partners.

Quote (implementing partner)

*“A lot of work was done there with the parents, because at first many parents did not want to let their girls into the project and these parents came to the hotel, looked at our academy, at our trainings. Then they made sure that we were on the right track and they didn’t bother too much about their daughters and they let them participate at the end. It was difficult in the beginning, they were always worried about their daughters. In [one of the target locations] the people are religious and especially their daughters are not allowed to go anywhere.”*

The boys and girls interacted well in the project. As families tend to be more traditional in border communities, this interaction constitutes a significant change – though among themselves, some stereotypical gender roles persisted. While awareness attaches itself to major decisions such as marriage or studies, participants still often fell back on habitual gender behaviours during mundane, daily inter-personal and group dynamics.

Quote (young person, female)

*“At the first events, we couldn’t build good relationship with boys. But then we started developing more warm relations, like elder brother, or like friends. Older ones called us ‘little sister’ (‘karyndash’).”*

<sup>64</sup> Major interethnic conflict in the Southern part of the country.

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The mentors systematically applied gender equity practices throughout activities, making sure to engage girls and treat them without prejudice, and indeed ensure that the project never led to gender-based discrimination. According to implementing partners, mentors and some female young participants, this brought about changes in attitudes for the youth and their parents, young women and men. Interviewees mentioned this in strong terms, which demonstrates personal realisation and critical thinking, from girls and boys. This also shows that the gender issues tackled by the projects were meaningful for all participants.

Both girls and boys interviewed by the evaluation team emphasized how girls in the project owned many of the successful initiatives and gains in terms of recognition. Success stories, such as coworking spaces or libraries, almost always included a large proportion of girls. Realising their potential and being acknowledged, supported and encouraged by parents, communities and local self-governments not only constituted a novel experience: it also opened new perspectives they would not have envisaged before the project. All project stakeholders appreciated this opportunity (local self-governments, young people, mentors, teachers, parents).

**Quote (youth participants, female)**

*“After the project I realised I should be responsible for myself, no one will do things for me. I can make my parents and other people proud of me. I changed so much. I pay attention to people around me: if someone has poor grades, I try to help. Previously we only thought of one solution to a problem. Now we think of many solutions, many implications, advantages and disadvantages. I started treating people differently.”*

*“I could also feel that I was changing. I realised I could accomplish things. I used to be afraid all the time, but now I am more confident. I was looking at our mentors, teachers, speakers and realised that I can become like them too.”*

**Finding 12:** Success stories emerged from the project activities where municipalities supported youth initiatives.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Project documents

Local self-governance documents from sampled municipalities

Social media analysis

Focus group with implementing partners

Interviews with local duty bearers, youth, parents, mentors, implementing partners

The theory of change aimed at local self-governments enhancing equitable access to rights. The successful occurrences of municipalities supporting youth initiatives uphold several elements of the theory of change, in particular civic participation (results level), towards prosperity issues (impact level). Beyond the local results and success stories, these occurrences can serve as models to champion further implementation of similar initiatives.

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As a result of the youth empowerment measures of the project, the young people not only acquired skills to speak up - they also defined the burning issues of the communities and contributed solution to local self-governments. In all four sampled municipalities, they harnessed support from the municipalities to realize their initiatives. For example, the young participants in Aidarken identified the problems in their town during bootcamp events: the lack of opportunities for personal growth, lack of organized spaces for leisure, environmental degradation of the city. Having met with the Mayor, they obtained premises and established a coworking centre in the city-hall building and 20,000 Kyrgyz soms from the local budget for the reconstruction of the city park. Currently the coworking centre is functioning and the municipality covers the internet connection and electricity cost. In the same municipality, two young girls trained by the project on media literacy, publishing, maintenance of social media outlets and news feed, digital photography, now maintain the town's social network pages and relay the youth's initiatives through this outlet.

In Kerben the young people lobbied the Mayor's office for the purchase of computers for the students in the local school (which had only one computer for the teachers and the director). With the mini-grants from the project, the school was equipped with several computers, tablets and books, and opened an electronic library.

In Kok-Serek, the local government provided a whole building and refurbished it, so the young people opened a youth centre and a hairdresser there. The hairdressing salon equipment was financed by the project grant.

In Kashkar-Kyshtak, the community is multinational, with a large representation of Uzbeks along Kyrgyz people. As informed by the interviewees, the young people were already civically active before the project. They opened their own youth initiative group, established a registered youth centre where they conduct numerous events, partly through the project's mini-grants programme, and beyond.

In eight of the nine locations of the project, local self-governments provided the young participants with at least 350,000 Kyrgyz soms worth of monetary and in-kind, in the form of premisses for youth centres and other initiatives, purchase of computers and laptops for various purposes (one-stop-shop, school, youth centre).<sup>65</sup> All interviewed local self-government representatives confirmed that they will allocate budgets for 2021 for youth support, without however mentioning exact figures. Some village councils already annually allocate funds for youth work: for instance in Kerben, the Youth Committee has 200,000 soms for youth work, and the Mayor's office planned 300,000 soms from the municipal budget 2021 for youth and additionally around 400,000 for sports. This shows a new, strong convergence between the local administration and elected officials, and the youth.

**Quote (local duty bearer)**

*"I myself changed my tactics when interacting with the young generation. I decided to work closely with the young people as they bear the future... The main outcome was the people and myself believe the young people can bring new ideas, resolve issues to benefit the whole community."*

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<sup>65</sup> Project report June 2020.



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**Finding 13:** The pilots projects concerning service delivery in municipalities were well received by local self-governments and rights holders, but remained modest and scattered.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Project documents

Focus group with implementing partners

Interviews with local duty bearers, implementing partners

The theory of change aimed at local self-governments and the State government enhancing equitable access to rights and to redress mechanisms. This point was identified as crucial by the project's baseline study.

Some interviewees shared that staff working at the village councils do not actually think of improving their services, not necessarily deliberately, but because they are caught in their routine and lack expertise in a context of slow public reforms. But during the trainings, when asked about their vision for local service delivery, they put themselves in the rights holders' shoes and talked about shorter waiting time, suppression of bribery, and streamlining of users' interactions with fewer officials. By modelling the expectations of the population, the trained duty bearers experienced a shift in their mindset.

The single-window (one-stop-shop) points for services piloted by the project after training of relevant duty bears allow beneficiaries living in pilot municipalities to get information and documents with a single-entry point overseen by the municipal jurist who reviews and refers citizens' requests, which facilitates access, especially for remote communities. People then individually refer to the village council specialists – who sit in the same room. No formal procedure was yet established to monitor customer satisfaction, though the clients had a chance to file their satisfaction rating in the logbook of the municipal jurists where they registered their cases.<sup>66</sup> In each target location, a short regulation document was adopted to institutionalise the service. Basic infrastructural developments were made to launch the one-stop-shop approach of municipal service delivery, like repairs of the premises used for this purpose, which were supported by the municipalities, and furniture and computers provided by the project.

It is too early to evaluate the quality of service and its impact of the services in terms of effective enjoyment of their rights by the rights holders, as it started only recently, but both the local self-governments and the rights holders welcomed the initiative. The service was well received according to representatives at both national and local levels. They used this opportunity to do their job and better fulfil their mandate. However, these pilots could not be refined nor could they cover all intended areas of expertise in such short a time. In addition, the municipalities will not have the resources to continue beyond the end of the project and would need backing up from central agencies. Digital means of information processing is lacking, and local administrative processes would need to be linked to the national databases. Larger structural changes within public administration reform are needed to implement the single-window system – which is not within the mandate of peacebuilding initiatives.

Additionally, since July 2020, the project supported the State Registry office in its delegation of four types of registry services to the level of municipality: ID renewal, marriage, death, and birth certificates issuance. This would enable the population to receive these registry services locally, saving them money and time, instead of going to the regional administrative

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<sup>66</sup> These spontaneous feedbacks inform on the degree of satisfaction of the beneficiaries concerning the possibility to channel their complaints and grievances linked with the quality of the services provided by the local institutions.

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centre. This service is particularly relevant to vulnerable populations for whom travelling is difficult (people with disability, poor people). Thus, the project used the current ongoing initiative of the Registry office to speed up this delegation of authority in the project pilot regions at least. However, due to the pandemic, the service was launched very late in the project, and its concrete results could not be assessed. Besides, the delegation of functions would have required regulatory, and possibly legislative amendments to go beyond small-scale experiment. Local officers called for intensive guidance by the regional registry office on every aspect of the delegated duty, starting with taking photos for IDs which corresponded to the specified requirements. The modest frame of this project activity is not equipped to respond to such deep and vast reform requirements.

At the beginning of the project, the implementing partners arranged focus group discussions during which 347 people were consulted (128 men, 219 women, and 174 youth from the total) on their needs related to legal issue, to channel conflict towards legal means. The implementing partner, the Association of Legal Clinics, led the focus group discussions with the beneficiaries at the target project locations involving a mobile working group: the director of the department of the registry service, a representative of the President Apparatus, a regional representative of ombudsperson's office, regional representatives of the Ministry of Justice, the Legal Clinics, UNDP, etc. The project developed a mini-guide for municipal jurists and tailored services. School students also delivered presentations in class on human rights, Constitution, family law, civil law, media literacy, peaceful co-existence as part of the society.

In total, 906 people received primary legal aid within the project timespan.<sup>67</sup> From May 2019 to the end of July 2020, 735 beneficiaries (20,4% youth, 55,1% women) received legal services tailored by the project, such as the legal support within the single window or Youth-to-Youth Legal Aid.

Legal clinics are a good example of providing non-violent avenues for conflict resolution, access to human rights, and redress in case of violation. The law students were instrumental for this. The three universities in Osh, Jalalabad, Batken concluded tripartite Memorandums of Understanding with the village councils and Legal Aid Clinics. The law students had an opportunity to provide peer-to-peer primary free legal aid withing their internships in local administrations of where they came from. This initiative was supported by the UNDP. Said experience was well received locally, both by duty bearers and rights holders. In some cases, at the close of the project, village councils offered jobs and accommodation to "their" law students. As a result of this initiative, 141 people received primary legal aid (out of this number 42% were youth; and 43% of the total number were citizens of the neighbouring countries).

**Quote (implementing partner)**

*"A student of Batken State University, who is originally from Aidarken, was placed for internship at the Mayor's office in Aidarken. As a result, at the end of her internship she got a certificate from the Mayor of Aidarken for her contribution. It was a great chance for a young person like her."*

Based on the key informant interviews, the legal services delivered by the project lawyers were popular among the communities, especially to resolve citizenship issues of the border population, and in turn birth certificates, allocation of social entitlements, and access to economic and social rights such as healthcare and education. Unfortunately, this service was not resumed by the target municipalities when the project support terminated, and there is a concern that failure to fulfil the rights of others affected by citizenship and birth certification issues is not corrected in the future.

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<sup>67</sup> Presentation by Nargiza Tashtemirova on youth cohesion project data, with figures on the legal aid provided.

The border area communities welcomed another initiative: the improvement of the basic infrastructure at four border checkpoints, in the interest of citizens of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan crossing the border. A small-scale project in itself within the current project, it certainly contributed to improving relations in the border areas by providing positive experiences to the citizens of both countries when crossing the border (so we gather on the Kyrgyz side at least). This also corresponds to the wide-spread view of the causes for tensions (see finding 10) and border area communities therefore regard this as highly relevant. Based on the informal feedback they received, border officials report that 99% of the people crossing the border expressed a positive opinion regarding the fast procedure after the new computers were installed. Before that, many rights holders said that they had had to wait longer due to old and slow computers at the Kyrgyz border checkpoints. With the new equipment, the speed and most importantly the reliability of actually being authorised to cross the border increased. Border officials report there were no failures, which shows high satisfaction with the project input.

**Quote (local duty bearer)**

*“It is important to say that these checkpoints are crossed by the citizens of the Uzbekistan living in enclaves (Sokh, Shahimardan) and it is important to provide them with a positive experience so that their attitude to the neighbouring country will be positive. The main project idea was not only about the Kyrgyz citizens, so here the result would be felt by both sides.”*

Overall, all services established with support of the project were received with great enthusiasm by the project stakeholders at all levels, and supported by local level duty bearers. The assumption in the theory of change about the political will (on local level) to support such changes is realised. However, the links between the core component of the project, youth empowerment, and some of the service provision supported by this component (the one-stop-shop and the border crossing points) is tenuous. These constituted interesting pilots, but belong in vaster public administration reform and border management programmes.

**Finding 14:** National level duty bearers and their regional level representation became better connected with the final beneficiaries’ aspirations and realities.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Interviews with national and regional duty bearers, interviews with youth

Project reports

Official documents integrating youth initiatives, or financing/supporting youth initiatives

The theory of change aimed at local self-governments and the central government enhancing equitable access to rights and redress. The project created channels for the voices of the rights holders, and offered solutions through pilot initiatives. These pilots, as well as civic events, then allowed the national duty bearers and their regional level representation to become better connected with the final beneficiaries’ aspirations and realities.

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The staff of State Agency on Youth affairs were reportedly fully aware and supportive of the project.<sup>68</sup> The project trained the staff of the Agency, and enabled them to interact with the young people of border areas during large project events such as consultations with the beneficiaries, the Kyrgyz-Uzbek Forum (March 2019), online forum, etc. This was meaningful for the Agency as the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a tighter budget and travel bans which limited its ability to reach the remote regions. According to interviews with the Agency at national and regional level, the staff also improved cooperation with their counterparts from Uzbekistan (former the Youth Union of Uzbekistan, now the Agency on Youth Affairs under the Government of Uzbekistan) during these events. Other national level duty bearers, such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, experienced new avenues to connect with their final beneficiaries by informing the population on social allowances, even if during a short time span. Even if the interaction of the project with the national partners was for a short period (a few months with the project), it allowed them to get the best use of this cooperation especially in terms of connecting with their final beneficiaries.

**Quote (national level duty bearer)**

*“Our department has learnt that many people do not know about maternity allowance, ritual aid [funeral allowance], monetary compensations. I understood that we need to inform people more broadly on these allowances and benefits. But maternity allowance is given for working mothers, many of people in the villages do not have official jobs and they do not know about this allowance. ”*

### 5.3 Efficiency

**Evaluation question 4: To what extent have the project implementers optimized their assets and comparative advantages?**

**Key Findings:**

**Finding 15:** Federated by a common peacebuilding approach, the recipient United Nations organisations achieved deep cooperation, but missed some synergies with sister projects across the borders of Kyrgyzstan.

**Finding 16:** The recipient United Nations organisations made the most of their assets within the country, particularly local offices and their network of CSOs, to reach out to underserved regions with a large panel of activities, within a modest budget.

**Finding 17:** The slow start of the project due to inter-agency coordination and then the COVID-19 crisis led to a final rush.

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<sup>68</sup> Annual report 2019, p. 7-8: The State Registry Service, Presidential Administration, Ombudsman’s office, Ministry of Justice, local municipalities demonstrated a high interest in the project as they agree on the need of the preventive activities helping to promote youth cohesion and, as a result, sustainable peace.

**Finding 15:** Federated by a common peacebuilding approach, the recipient United Nations organisations achieved deep cooperation, but missed some synergies with sister projects across the borders of Kyrgyzstan.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Project documents

Interviews with UN staff, IPs, PBF

PBF reports

Closed UN projects with Tajikistan

Conflict analysis in Central Asia

Focus group discussion with UN staff

The input level of the theory of change foresaw a high complementarity and an interwoven engagement of the three UN agencies. At first, the evaluation team tried to separate UN agencies activities, to unpack the project documents and attribute areas or implementing partners as would be expected, but found a more complex intertwinement than usual – this is a testimony to the level of integration of the three agencies in the project, where a real cooperation took place rather than separate but coordinated activities. The three agencies shared the same methods (training, youth groups, participatory project proposals, component on small grant), and had the same understanding of the theory of change and key assumptions.

The clarity of the project logic, and a genuine will to cooperate rather than just coordinate, were the key success factor for this real joint implementation. The peacebuilding approach was a good federating avenue for this cooperation, because:

- Contributing to peace mobilized strong values and beliefs among the staff;
- Peacebuilding is a wide and inclusive enough concept to accommodate the mandates and specialities of all three agencies;
- The strength of conflict analysis, embodied by the Peacebuilding Priority Plans which had already mobilized intensive reflection among the United Nations agencies, federated efforts into a clear conceptual framework.

The monitoring and evaluation workshops were also instrumental in that regard and were a driving element of efficiency. This led to a smooth collaboration with a good synergy among the UN partners, with intense communication and discussions. This common vision was in part facilitated by the alignment with the youth empowerment approach of the National Youth Agency, whose Director actively participated in project design and was ready to cooperate with all three United Nations Agencies.

Another key success factor was the enabling approach of the leadership: the Resident Coordinator and the recently appointed heads of all three agencies personally followed the project, and sent a clear message to the staff on deep cooperation. Finally, the existence of a UNICEF Office in Osh, with representatives from all three agencies, was a decisive factor: directly exposed with the realities of the rights holders and empowered by their management, they felt strongly about joining forces because they perceived joint implementation as the most effective way to reach out to more beneficiaries and serve them better. For instance, the UN agencies supported each other with awareness-raising and mobilization of participants through their own project participants. This empowerment of the project staff proved to be invaluable in 2020: implementing partners reported that



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the project staff were highly equipped to face the COVID-19 crisis and adapted in direct alignment with the project's objectives and purpose.

#### Quotes (UN staff)

*"Joint planning, common monitoring and evaluation framework, joint implementation: these are exceptional! Getting UN agencies to do that for real is difficult. Usually, for instance, it is very difficult to get them to report jointly. In this case it was fairly easy."*

*"We managed to involve youth from Uzbekistan thanks to the mobilisation of UNICEF, and UNDP, and UNFPA who pushed for this: the one-UN approach really helped."*

During implementation, the division of labour reflected the existing networks and experiences of the United Nations in Kyrgyzstan, with all three agencies engaged in youth empowerment and capacity building of local self-government (and UNDP taking the lead on rule of law issues). UNFPA and UNICEF mostly divided work geographically. UNICEF being the lead agency, its project management procedures applied, but key procedures were implemented jointly. The joint selection of implementing partners for UNICEF and UNFPA was a novel experience, which required heavy alignment of procedures and long negotiating processes, but which eventually succeeded. Lengthy procurement spent the donor's patience capital and strained the implementing partners' calendar.

The degree of collaboration between the three UN agencies was an interesting experience for the staff, who took ownership of it and reflected it in the monitoring and reporting. The monitoring mechanisms adapted midway through the project were expedient in measuring progress and reporting along jointly crafted indicators and in the same document. This also enabled clear decision making and guidance of all three agencies towards the implementing partners, in an autonomous but fully coherent: none of the interviews with implementing partners suggested that they ever received mixed messages, which is rather exceptional.

Except a few instances of participants having attended events of both the Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan" and UNDP events, there is no indication of duplication nor of overlap with other UN initiatives in Kyrgyzstan, such as another UNDP civil society support project involving border communities, and a comparable cross-border project with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. This is partly because the project evaluated here was rather small compared to the other UNDP projects. As the project pioneered some activities, the work was clear-cut and overlaps were improbable from the start. The project objectives are also complementary with other PBF projects, as its funding focusses on Rule of Law and dialogue, and has a special Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI) component.<sup>69</sup> The other GYPI project in Kyrgyzstan funded by the PBF, "Strengthening capacity of young women and men in Kyrgyzstan to promote peace and security" follows similar lines, to "empower youth to advocate for action and accountability from their authorities, and create opportunities for meaningful youth participation in decision-making processes around peace and security";<sup>70</sup> thus, creating a coherent effort regarding objectives and timing.

In contrast, the project mostly ignored other conflict-related projects in the region, for instance a sister project in Uzbekistan. There was very limited benchmarking with other PBF-funded projects, or with the peacebuilding plans of other United Nations Offices, in Uzbekistan and

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<sup>69</sup> <[www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/kyrgyzstan\\_two-pager.pdf](http://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/kyrgyzstan_two-pager.pdf)> [30/12/2020].

<sup>70</sup> <<https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-01/UNPBF-%20KYRG-Saferworld%20UNPBF%20GYPI%20-%20project%20document.pdf>> [30/12/2020].

Tajikistan for instance. In interviews and focus group discussion with the United Nations staff, it became clear that cooperation with the United Nations Office in Uzbekistan was never considered, because the project was implemented on the territory of Kyrgyzstan, and because the Kyrgyz National Youth Agency had a prominent role in cross-border activities, which should not have been overshadowed. This is surprising, as the project meant to mobilize state and local actors as well as youth from Uzbekistan, which proved challenging in practice: youth from Uzbekistan were involved to the extent possible, which was only a very modest extent. Facilitation by other projects in Uzbekistan could have gone a long way to enhance the cross-border aspect of the project. Focus group participants acknowledged that an opportunity had not been used, and that there is a potential for much more synergy in the future. They also pointed that cross-fertilisation among PBF-funded projects is mostly driven by individual initiative. The project stakeholders were also unaware of comparable initiatives being undertaken by PBF-funded projects in the Western Balkans. There clearly lacks a systemic platform that would connect PBF projects and their implementers with one another, in order to breed mutual support, inspiration and learning.

The project staff was familiar with the Cross-border Cooperation for Sustainable Peace and Development (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) project, which inspired some youth empowerment activities,<sup>71</sup> and there is evidence of exchange of experience with the UN agencies in Tajikistan.<sup>72</sup> However, the project documents do not explicitly refer to this project, and no joint activities were implemented. The project documents stated: “The project closely coordinated with UN Peacebuilding (YPI and GPI) and Prevention of violent extremism (PVE) projects within frames of PPP implementation, to discuss best practices and lessons learnt. The RUNOs coordinated implementation of activities with other peacebuilding projects in the project locations including Search for Common Ground, Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflicts, Saferworld, International Alert, Helvetas, Internews and other partners working in the area of peacebuilding and PVE.” However, these transversal possibilities were not used. They were either not relevant to the project, or reaching out was too heavy to be useful. A reflection on the adequate format of interactions, if any, might contribute to the external assumptions (efficiency criterion of the theory of change).

**Finding 16:** The recipient United Nations organisations made the most of their assets within the country, particularly local offices and their network of CSOs, to reach out to underserved regions with a large panel of activities, within a modest budget.

#### Triangulated evidence basis

Interviews with UN staff, with implementing partners

Focus group with implementing partners

Project documents and reports

To implement the project, the United Nations agencies relied on several assets:

- The financial resources provided by the PBF (\$ 1,500,000);
- The human resources of each agency in the country, with their experience, expertise and individual professional reputation;
- The political clout of the United Nations Office in Kyrgyzstan and respective agencies, based on the mandates and set of standards of the respective agencies, the heritage

<sup>71</sup> Cf. de Weijer, Frauke / PeaceNexus Foundation, Review of PBF Cross-border Cooperation for Sustainable Peace and Development in the Border Area of Kyrgyzstan & Tajikistan, 20-11-2017.

<sup>72</sup> <<http://en.kabar.kg/news/kyrgyz-tajik-specialists-on-capacity-building-of-youth-meet-in-osh-to-exchange-experience/>>, [28/12/2020].

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of past projects and partnerships, and generally the reputation of the United Nations in the region;

- The network of partners, from government to local level and CSOs;
- The existence of a strong back office for each agency and as a full-fledged United Nations Country Office, with a decentralised structure (representation in some provinces, particularly in Osh), set of administrative and financial processes and procedures, auditing standards, tendering and recruitment capacity, logistical means, communication and public relations, etc.

The theory of change at input level assumed (and heavily relied on) the existence of civic activism and capacity: this was clearly the case, as implementing CSOs (and company) proved both very committed to, and capable of conducting the activities while mobilizing all stakeholders within the communities. Civic activism and capacity were not only pre-existing, the engagement in cooperation was also remarkably successful. This enabled the swift and competent implementation of the project. This was corroborated in the interviews with the CSOs, who highlighted the smooth and mutually beneficial cooperation. Duty bearers at local level mostly interacted with the implementing partners rather than with UN officials. This limited public perception of the UN agencies among project participants, but did not impede achievements.

Thanks to the synergies described in finding 15, the project made the most of the existing partnerships of the United Nations at national and municipal levels within the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The political clout of the United Nations was instrumental in striking the deals required to launch this bold project in sensitive provinces. Clear mandates and standards for the agencies, the prestige of the function of Resident Coordinator who in addition personally advocated the project at national level, and the reputation of both the institutions and the individual, were all instrumental to secure political will, a key assumption of the theory of change. Had the project been entrusted to a regional organisation or directly to CSOs, it would have been unlikely to obtain such support.

There is clear evidence of the benefits brought by the UNICEF Office in Osh. The project harnessed these advantages in terms of administrative capacity to back the activities up locally, in terms of networking with local officials. The Office in Osh, along with the implementing partners, also brought close understanding of the local peculiarities of each province and municipality, which in turn were instrumental to adjust the activities and the monitoring of the project throughout its implementation. This was particularly needed to face the COVID-19 crisis and move activities online swiftly, in a way that was adapted to local conditions. As a result, there is no indication that any locality was under-served compared to the others within the project. All interviewed stakeholders were highly appreciative of this geographic equity, and of the project's capacity to reach out to the most remote locations, where no other such project had gone before. The Osh branch carried out active outreach to the targeted communities, which were multiplied by the implementing partners, in a decisive fashion to reach the most deprived and isolated participants.

Carrying out test drives in these regions, the project did not – indeed could not – create systemic changes. The intention was rather to create new opportunities and expectations, and this was achieved thanks to full mobilisation of the above-mentioned factors. With its reasonable budget and its relatively small scale, the project therefore succeeded to open many doors. The review of the project's budget does not show any waste, although the budget was somewhat scattered between the many activities and components. The value for money of the project is therefore quite good, because the financial resources were optimized thanks to other assets examined above. The PBF now needs to follow up on the paths explored, otherwise the investment to open doors will have been in vain. The way ahead, based on the project's exploration, is to focus thematically but scale up in magnitude.

**Finding 17:** The slow start of the project due to inter-agency coordination and then the COVID-19 crisis led to a final rush.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Interviews with CSOs

Focus group discussion with implementing partners

Project documents

Quarterly reports by implementing partners, reports on each activity from trainers, responsible staff

The high complementarity of the UN agencies, visible at input level of the theory of change, implied intense coordination, particularly visible during the inception phase and the tender process to contract the implementing partners. Joint selection of implementing partners involved a common financial management process and intense negotiations to clarify the selection process and criteria. This process was instrumental to equip the implementing partners with a clear framework and common direction. However, the length of the tendering process curtailed the implementing partners' ability to deliver on time and at the pace originally envisaged by the project plans, because it delayed severely the start of the implementing partners' activities and led to rush the participants. Once the implementing partners were recruited, the cooperation was perceived as good both by the UN agencies and the implementing partners. The COVID-19 crisis and the time required to move online, though it was handled swiftly and efficiently, compounded these delays. While some youth had trainings throughout the year, others only had two or three months of participation. They saw their intervention constrained, with too many activities too quickly. The project benefited from a 6-months no-cost extension. This was however not enough to overcome the slow start and the adaptation to COVID-19 circumstances.

At local level, the cross-border activities took longer to setup than expected. Much preparation and convincing was needed to organise local cross-border events, as the communities and duty bearers consider that there are not existing relationships with the neighbours to begin with, they see no ground for improvement. Involving participants from Uzbekistan made implementation heavier and more bureaucratic in terms of clearance from governments at national and local levels. Moving online due to the COVID-19 crisis provided some opportunities to circumvent this situation: online interaction was logistically lighter and better accepted by officials.

**Evaluation question 5: To what extent were interventions under this project complementary, harmonized, coordinated with the government's and other peacebuilding actors' interventions?**

**Key Findings:**

**Finding 18:** On paper, there is an alignment of project and Government strategy. In practice, the UN vision also incorporates interethnic relations, which are not an explicit objective of the Government.

**Finding 19:** There is a good alignment of strategic objectives between the project and CSOs/implementing partners.

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**Finding 18:** On paper, there is an alignment of the project and the government strategy. In practice, the UN vision also incorporates interethnic relations, which are not an explicit objective of the Government.

Triangulated evidence basis

National strategy (joint action plans of cooperation at State and Province levels)

Memorandum of the Understanding between youth-related government agencies of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan

Project documents

Interviews with implementing partners, UN project staff

The assumptions of the theory of change on political will were fulfilled, but the project hinged on an implicit “agreement to disagree” on the interethnic component of the project. The political will for increased interaction with Uzbekistan is clearly articulated in the joint action plan with the Uzbek government for 2017-2019, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek State Agencies for Youth and Sport, and the three southern provinces cooperation action plans with their Uzbek peers. All are compatible with the activities planned by the project: for instance, the Memorandum of Understanding between youth agencies foresees cooperation for the participation of youth in conferences, round tables, festivals or exhibitions, visits to historical cities of both countries, and prioritizes some of the project’s areas of interest such as entrepreneurship, employment, IT or culture.

The project harnessed the momentum created by these documents, which increased ownership while broaching sensitive issues. The State Agency for Youth in particular was consulted during the drafting of the project, which was developed based on their suggestions and inputs. Synergy was strong,<sup>73</sup> as demonstrated, amongst other things, by the Youth March 2019 forum which was held by the State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture and Sports under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic with the support of the UN in Kyrgyzstan and with the participation of an Uzbekistan delegation. During that event, more than 100 young people from three bordering provinces of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan discussed the partnership perspectives and advocated their proposals with national agencies.<sup>74</sup> Such a symbolic and visible event shows converging interests between the project and the government.

On a different note, the project faced difficulties to rally the Ministry of Education to the project.<sup>75</sup> The Ministry of Education and Science and the NGO “Youth of Osh” signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the end of 2019, granting “Youth of Osh” access to schools, as some schools were not allowing access to NGO staff. UNICEF has a framework agreement with the Government that is renewed once in 5 years, so UNICEF does not usually sign Memorandum of Understanding for individual projects. However, in practice, implementing partners report inertia from the Ministry of Education, and limited involvement of the schools. There is a large potential for improvement of the synergy with the Ministry of Education.

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<sup>73</sup> Annual report 2019, p. 7: “The State Agency on Youth, Physical Culture and Sports of the Kyrgyz Republic (SAYPCS) fully owns the project. The project work plan was developed in coordination with all stakeholders and signed by the State Agency. SAYPCS is part of all major events and aware of all interventions planned and conducted in the regions.”

<sup>74</sup> PBF project progress report June 2019, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> Annual report 2019, p. 5: “One of the main difficulties in the field is the participation of school students in the project activities. The project team issued an official letter to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic to provide support and endorsement to the activity. Given the delays in the official reply the project team is temporarily implementing the activities with the support of local government, parents and schools’ administrations on the margins of the education process.”



Most importantly, political support for work on interethnic relations within the country is still very uncertain. The positive in-country effect within local communities, while widely recognized, could not go as far as bringing about an open approach to the domestic interethnic issues with government officials. The unique position of UN agencies can be pivotal to further advocate for this issue in the future. UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP in Kyrgyzstan are mandated to work with the youth, civil society actor and local self-government, who are identified among priority groups by the PBF Peacebuilding Priority Plan in Kyrgyzstan 2017-2021, and can therefore support the Government to develop and implement programmes promoting peace and tolerance. It is now time to build on the good reputation and encouraging results of the project, in a context of scarce government resources to follow up, and to advocate for the emergence of a social and interethnic cohesion agenda.

**Finding 19:** There is a good alignment of strategic objectives between the project and CSOs/implementing partners.

#### Triangulated evidence basis

CSOs websites

Proceeds of the tendering process

Project documents, project reports and report of implementing partners

Interviews with implementing partners

Focus group with implementing partners

The theory of change assumed not only the existence and capacity of CSOs to support civic activism: it also assumed that the CSOs' and project's objectives and approach would coincide. This was the case, as CSOs which were already well implanted, for example in Osh city, were ready and willing to start reaching out to communities in border areas, and transfer their expertise in youth empowerment to more vulnerable target groups than their usual beneficiaries.

#### Quotes (implementing partner)

*"As youth organisation, we work with youth from various areas and social groups, but we had never worked with youth from border areas. We had already worked with UNFPA here on the peacebuilding approach. With this project, we wanted to start working with vulnerable people throughout the region, and especially in Kyrgyzstan."*

*"It was interesting for me to study our beneficiaries. Lately, we all pay more attention to how we provide information to the people. And in what format. We received a great support and push."*

Testimonies on successful cooperation (in interviews and implementing partners' reports), as well as the online presentations of the implementing partners, also demonstrate close alignment of approaches and techniques. Implementing partners quickly grasped the peacebuilding and youth empowerment nexus that forms the project's theoretical framework. They fully recognized themselves in the impact and purpose levels of the theory of change. They also found the United Nations' approach to activities very close to their own experience. For instance, "Youth of Osh develops young people as active

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citizens in Kyrgyzstan, by strengthening their capacities and promoting their interests in the community.”<sup>76</sup> IDEA CA “promote[s] youth participation in civic life” and tends “to the needs of underprivileged youth”<sup>77</sup> and “Accelerate Prosperity in Kyrgyzstan is focused on promising entrepreneurs from rural and semi-rural areas” and works “on catalysing local small and medium businesses where economic opportunities remain insufficient”<sup>78</sup> This proximity of values, strategic objectives and know-how enabled them to swiftly assimilate the tools and methodologies developed by the United Nations Agencies, such as UPSHIFT or LIA, and to adjust them to the realities of their audience.

The implementing partners’ capacities and added value therefore blended well into the project’s theory of change in terms of target groups and input-level assumptions, and through the chain of anticipated changes. They also ripped some benefits of the project for their own organisational development: they were already engaged in youth empowerment, but the project enabled them to expand their outreach to the southern regions, to better integrate peacebuilding into their agendas, to formulate their vision strongly on this issue, and to develop and test innovative methods of youth engagement and support. In the future, they will remain an important relay for the United Nation’s advocacy on peacebuilding, especially on interethnic integration and cohesion.

**Quote (implementing partner)**

*“We were contacted by the UN regarding how to work on peacebuilding, defusing radicalisation. Here, lecturing on the values of Islam is counter-productive. Better just create and talk about alternatives of self-development. This can lead to real peacebuilding. We brainstormed on this, and then we worked on projects.*”

## 5.4 Impact

**Evaluation question 6: How effective have the project strategies and approaches been in contributing to peace and stability in border areas?**

**Key Findings:**

**Finding 20:** Most significant changes are at individual level: more trust, more confidence, more hope.

**Finding 21:** Youth prove a good catalyst for impact.

**Finding 22:** Youth agencies on both sides of the border increased their cooperation.

**Finding 20:** Most significant changes are at individual level: more trust, more confidence, more hope.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Interviews with youth, parents, mentors, teachers, CSOs

Project reports

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<sup>76</sup> <[www.peaceinsight.org/en/organisations/youth-of-osh/?location=kyrgyzstan&theme](http://www.peaceinsight.org/en/organisations/youth-of-osh/?location=kyrgyzstan&theme)> [30/12/2020].

<sup>77</sup> <<https://peacenexus.org/idea/>> [30/12/2020].

<sup>78</sup> <<https://kg.accelerateprosperity.org/en/>> [30/12/2020].

The theory of change envisages inclusive dialogue at impact level, and the project has achieved this in many ways. This was very often mentioned in interviews as the most significant change. The precondition for this is self-confidence and hope of the stakeholders on the one hand, and mutual trust on the other hand. This clearly took place among individuals and was rendered possible by personal transformations for youth and their communities, first at the personal level, and then at the level of interpersonal relations. This was particularly the case for female interviewees among the youth, although it is too early to separately analyse potential impact according to sex.

The object of the dialogue varied from group to group: among youth (and to some extent between youth and their parents) the issue of “friendship” among ethnic groups and across the border took place. Between youth and the local self-government, the dialogue rather concerned civic participation and empowerment. The interviews with the youth, parents and mentors point to increased trust in people beyond their personal circle, which for many participants was a new realisation: this includes the project implementors and mentors, local self-government officials, youth from other municipalities, gender, social or ethnic background. For instance, the project inspired other initiatives: there are new interactions between Kyrgyz and Tajik community schools in Aidarken city, which did not work together previously. They needed their interaction to be facilitated at the start and they now have plans to carry on, especially concerning the delivery of conflict-resolution classes. Inclusive dialogue in terms of gender and ethnicity within Kyrgyzstan and across the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border was mentioned positively by interviewees when they reflected on these interactions. Even though we must assume that reserved opinions would hardly be voiced in the context of an evaluation (cultural bias) and that enthusiastic participants would particularly volunteer for interviews (volunteer bias), this data is not inherently flawed as to its contents (i.e. changes induced by the project), merely as to its quantitative representativeness.



### Reimagining brighter future with Takhmina

Takhmina is a 17-year old girl in a border town of Aidarken in Batken province. She concedes rural communities in Kyrgyzstan are not always able to offer diverse development avenues for young people: boys go to Russia as labour migrants, girls get married in their early twenties. Border communities have even less capacity to do so, as they are often isolated; few people pass by them. It is thus no surprise children in these communities lack role models to follow, which would help them imagine lives they can live. Takhmina admits that a year ago she used to be a shy and timid girl too, concentrated only on her studies and rarely thought of her future.

Then Takhmina’s teacher suggested she participate in the project “Cheksiz dostuk” (Borderless friendship), initiated by UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA. Within the project, about a hundred young people of 15-25 years old from nine border communities of Osh, Batken, and Djalal-Abad provinces were

empowered to participate in peacebuilding and decision-making. This way UNICEF is abiding by its mission to enable the youth to enjoy their rights fully. Throughout a year, Takhmina, along with her 15 peers from other border communities had trainings on public speaking, design thinking, and debating organized by UNICEF and UNFPA. They played games with mentors, visited different places and learnt to interact with local authorities. It was at the project events, that Takhmina met young people who spoke English, studied abroad, and had professions she had never heard before, like IT and marketing.

Within a year of being part of this project, Takhmina says she has changed. She is much more confident and outspoken. A friend from “Cheksiz dostuk” project, himself a resident at Kashkar-Kyshtak village, suggested to Takhmina to apply for the “School parliament” project, and she got in. Another “Cheksiz dostuk” friend from Padysha-Ata village got high score at the Republican school test last year, and now she helps Takhmina to ace the test. With her new friends, Takhmina discusses books, professions, and studies. She has already finished reading her fifth book this month!

On top of that, after Takhmina’s team opened a media center for the local community, she realized she could manage the social media pages of Aidarken town mayor’s office. Takhmina has been doing the job for a year already. She is keen about learning Social Media Marketing and design. Her eyes shine brighter when she talks of logos and patterns. She says she couldn’t imagine such an interesting life a year ago. Now Takhmina has dreams: she wants to study IT and see the world.

#### Quote (youth)

*“At the beginning, my father was strongly against my participation. Even several months later he told me to leave. And then I went to him and explained that it was important. He said that I would not have been able to tell him this before, and now I can, and then he said I should continue with the project.”*

#### Quote (youth)

*“When we went to Kochkor-Ata, we got to know so many knowledgeable people: our mentors, teachers. So, we thought – ‘What if we treat people around us like that – respectfully’”*

Increased mutual trust and respect in turn contribute to social peace in the communities, according to mentors and implementing partners in particular. Some youth also contribute to the resilience of communities to conflict. For instance, an implemented partner shared the example of a young project participant who intervened to prevent a fight over natural resources with a neighbouring village across the border: while he did not prevent the fight from happening, he impressed his elder with his commitment, and triggered discussions in the community. While anecdotal, such example points to the potential of impact on the

communities' permeability to conflictual rhetoric and resilience to conflictual situation. The project's impact-level assumption that dialogue and fulfilment of rights encourage reconciliation, is therefore plausible, but it still too soon to observe this.

On an anecdotal but symptomatic note, racketeering in some schools was reported to have decreased, as the project activities drew and channelled pupils' attention. Young participants talked about their rejuvenated interest in studying, to achieve more with their life.

**Quote (school director)**

*"Rates of bullying decreased significantly (informal school hierarchy, money extortion by older pupils). These are very complex problems: you can't punish the hooligan, and the victims don't complain and never tell us about those cases. For instance, in one team [within this project], there were teenagers from 9th, 10th, and 11th grade, and they ended up being friendlier."*

The individual-level changes in terms of self-confidence, skills and entrepreneurship or activism, presented in Findings 11 and 12, also bear the potential of expansion beyond the immediate project beneficiaries. If a few develop into long-term civic activist, advocates or local entrepreneurs - which is plausible given the level of commitment of some young participants and the support they gathered from their parents, teachers, local self-government - the project will have achieved impact.



**Rethinking leadership with Nursultan**

A 15-year old Nursultan resides in Monok village, Kara-Suu district, Osh province, Kyrgyzstan. The village borders with Uzbekistan and numbers 3,500 residents.

Nursultan is a self-described leader: leading comes naturally to him. However, without compelling role models to inspire and guide him, Nursultan saw no new horizons for own development.

With "Cheksiz dostuk" project Nursultan had an opportunity to discover new dimensions of his leadership capacities, to lead wider and diverse audiences, and to learn to manage team dynamics. "Cheksiz dostuk" is a joint project of UNICEF, UNDP, and UNFPA aimed at strengthening social cohesion in border communities of Southern provinces through empowering women and young people and ensuring their participation in



peacebuilding and decision-making. Through this project, UNICEF strived to further push its agenda of ensuring youth's access to their rights.

Within the project, around a hundred teens from several border communities in Djalal-Abad, Osh, and Batken provinces underwent a series of trainings, conducted research on their own community, and drew up development project proposals for their own villages. Successful project proposals were to be selected for funding. Nursultan and his teammate found out that their fellow villagers had to travel to a neighbouring village in order to get their documents printed. They proposed to set up a printing studio, and were selected for funding.

Encouraged by the positive community response to the printing studio, Nursultan and his teammate intend to open a hairdresser's salon for the village. Without such a service, villagers have to travel to neighbouring communities to get a haircut. Moreover, a salon would provide at least 2 jobs for local residents, and would be the first business endeavour for Nursultan and his friend.

Nursultan's leadership found a new direction: he realized he can lead teams and get meaningful causes implemented that benefit whole communities and help set up jobs. Now he sees how he can develop, what he needs to learn, and what kind of a leader he can become.

#### Quotes (youth)

*"I have new goals after the project. One day I want to start my own organisation. I started collecting information about it, thinking about how I can fund it. [...] I want to help people to express themselves, to conduct trainings, to understand themselves, to learn languages. The knowledge we have received is kind of advance payment, so we need to disseminate it."*

*"We don't have good internet in our village. I collected signatures of all villagers to get good internet connection. Villagers were glad I was doing it. I asked my mentor to help. We approached several telecom companies, all of them replied. Megacom company replied that they would put a station near us, and they did. The other company also visited and explored our location. This was my first independent initiative after the project."*

*"I'm proud of setting up the polygraphic centre [printing studio]. We have over 10,000 people in our village and we are proud that we have helped these people. And hopefully we will expand this. We also don't have a hairdresser's salon, so we hope to open it too. Me and my teammate renovated the centre on our own. It cost 7,000 KGS, we paid it from our own money."*

*"I used to be very indifferent towards community problems. Now I see that if I live in this village, I am among the reasons of its development or lack of development. It is within our hands to change the place where we live."*

#### Quote (parent)

*“My son is not afraid to go and talk to important people at local government bodies and ask support for their own projects. Their school now has a sports stadium, and more computers.*

*What I appreciate is that he has become more independent. [...] They are more prepared to choose their profession.”*

#### Finding 21: Youth prove a good catalyst for impact.

##### Triangulated evidence basis

Interviews youth, parents, mentors, teachers, CSOs, local duty bearers  
Project reports

At impact level, the theory of change aims at economic and social stability, equity, prosperity in border areas of Kyrgyzstan. It is too early to ascertain systemic impact, but key results of the project contributed in these directions, albeit on a small, often individual scale. In particular, several rights holders reported an improvement about the level of service they obtain, thanks to the initiatives of the project, especially the youth-led initiatives. While small, these changes demonstrate the potential impact of the youth, and their comparative advantage in demanding their and their community members' civil, political, economic, social and rights, in particular equitable access to rights and entitlements.

#### Quote (youth)

*“[The main project outcomes are that] people in the village had their need satisfied, they don't need to waste their money, they can get their things done here. Me and my teammate can earn some money there, for petty money. There were lots of changes in our life owing to this project.”*

*“There is a regular bus that runs through our village, but we don't know its schedule, we need to change and put its schedule, so that people don't waste their time waiting for the bus.”*

*“Before this project we thought about everything, even the smallest thing, ‘It should be done by the government or authorities’, ‘The mayor's office should provide us with that’, but now I understand that at least you should raise issues. What seems like a big problem to you, may look like a petty thing for authorities, so if you explain to them that this is serious and influences many people, they will understand its magnitude.”*

The small projects designed and implemented by school students were supposed to support interethnic friendship in order to obtain mini-grants. The general denial of existing interethnic tension (see finding 2) led to a slightly different framing of their projects: they proposed and implemented them with social cohesion in mind: a coworking space or library for all the local youth (Kyrgyz, Uzbek, etc.), a radio for all villagers, the park for all villagers, a creative centre for music and dancing classes for villagers, etc. While the

youth's discourse is not exactly that of the project, it is their way of approaching inclusion. Social cohesion is consistent with interethnic friendship and peacebuilding. It was a key impact-level assumption of the project (Stability and prosperity deter conflict) and the youth have delivered on both, in keeping with the theory of change of the project.

**Quote (parent)**

*"What I really liked is that we now have the hair salon. It works both for women and men. We didn't have a salon before. The project brought this to our village. And young people made it possible."*

**Quote (youth)**

*"We want to organize a series of events – to select an Uzbek book and arrange its discussion. We also want to organize a diversity fair of different ethnicities – to arrange it with three schools. Why I want to organize these events: it is good to be friends, when you live in one town. Having friends of other ethnicities is cool and interesting, people can learn other languages."*

**Finding 22: Youth agencies on both sides of the border increased their cooperation.**

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Interviews province-level duty bearers, State agency regional office, national duty bearers, UN staff

Project reports

Kyrgyz and Uzbek local self-governments and youth agencies at the province level on both sides of the border increased their interactions and cooperation, at least to some extent, which corresponds to an intended impact of the theory of change. Local self-governments reported that the interaction could have been more intense if not for the pandemic.

**Quote (province level duty bearer)**

*"The aim of the project was also to show the best practices in our pilot regions and in the future to work with the Uzbek side. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, it was not possible. Actually we had planned actions to work or to conduct joint activities with the youth from Uzbekistan, but due to the pandemic, it was not carried out."*

While the COVID-19 induced digital shift impeded in-person activities, it also resulted in more contact to the Uzbek counterparts on youth agency level. Most of the national level activities were either re-scheduled or transferred online as a result of bilateral agreements. Among the most relevant is the "Youth Peace Dialogue" online forum including an online "Youth diplomacy" week, which aimed to engage young people from both countries to discuss the importance of peace, diplomacy and cooperation. The project facilitated the cooperation of the State Agency on Youth Affairs in Kyrgyzstan to establish practical contract with its counterpart in Uzbekistan when organizing activities for the project. This

cooperation between the youth agencies of both countries is set to continue. In times of crisis, such activities speak for the will of both agencies, at national level and within their regional branches, to recognise and pursue common goals and to work on cross-border youth issues as a common priority.

## 5.5 Sustainability

**Evaluation question 7: How likely is it that the project's contribution to peacebuilding at the Kyrgyz/Uzbek borders will last in the long run?**

### Key Findings:

**Finding 23:** Youth interaction and initiatives have outlasted the closure of the project, even though their frequency and intensity have diminished.

**Finding 24:** Local self-governance units are supportive of youth-led initiatives and ready to carry on, but will require continued support from national authorities and from international cooperation partners to do so.

**Finding 25:** With a wide variety of fields and methods, the project was exploratory. Impact will require follow up and prioritization.

**Finding 23:** Youth interaction and initiatives have outlasted the closure of the project, even though their frequency and intensity have diminished.

### Triangulated evidence basis

Interviews with implementing partners, youth, mentors

Social media

The project has resulted in experiences of interactions and dialogue among participants of diverse ethnic, cultural, social, gender and geographic backgrounds. These experiences could have lasting effects due to their intensity for the participating youth, and sustained interactions and initiatives of the youth beyond the end of the project. Peaceful interaction of youth beyond these differences continues. The experiences have become a habit for some: youth teams continue to be active; inclusive community venues created by the youth (coworking space, library, radio station, school computer labs, parks, hairdresser salons...) continue to exist; project participants continue to interact and support each other on social media.

### Quote (youth, female)

*"I have friends in Batken now. If I have a problem now, I call them. If they have problems, they call me, and I'll do my best to solve it. Although we have different problems. I'm close with [a female participant] from Batken, and I asked her to help me with the Republican test for school-leavers, she had it last year, and she helps me."*

*"young people become more active; they ask me: 'What should we do next? Who needs help? How can we contribute?'"*

Quote (youth, female, majority background)

*"There is 'School parliament' that accepts applications. [An Uzbek male participant] suggested me to apply there, and I did! [The female participant] from Padysh-Ata got high score at the Republican test for school-leavers last year, and now she helps me with tips on how to get a high score."*

Quote (mentor)

*"After the project, young people went to visit the families that live right at the border and asked them about their relations with Uzbek residents, told them about the project goals and their experiences with the project. They explained that the [cross-border] relations between Uzbek and Kyrgyz will improve when people start treating each other better."*

*In May 2020 in Uzbekistan the Sardaba water reservoir had a breakdown, and people in our community under IDEA's guidance started brainstorming how we can help. They organized a charity event – people collected money and clothes. We communicated with our relatives in Uzbekistan and organized the transfer of clothes and money through the border. Uzbek people said that when the situation with the pandemic gets better, they will invite us, they agreed we should keep our hands together [remain friends]."*

However, this concerns a small number of people, not a systemic trend, and will require means to capitalize on the good will and new network of relationships among the youth, and between the youth and mentors. The partner CSOs and local self-governments are committed, but have the financial and human capacity to keep only few of the successful initiatives alive, let alone expand to a more systemic level.

Quote (implementing partner)

*"We expected that out of 100 000 viewers of our videos, about 900 to 1000 people would pick a task, out of which we would pick 50 and mentor them through the task. But mentors want to increase it to up to 200 people: since it's online, we can do it even beyond the end of the project. We want to give chances to as many people as possible."*

Without dedicated funding, these are unlikely to be maintained beyond a couple of examples. While the change experienced by the youth in terms of exposure and self-perception will outlast the project, their ability to influence their communities will require sustained support for these initiatives. In the long run, renewed positive experiences will be required to also maintain motivation: expectations have increased, and disappointing them could have counter-productive effects.



**Finding 24:** Local self-governance units are supportive of youth-led initiatives and ready to carry on, but will require continued support to do so.

**Triangulated evidence basis**

Interviews implementing partners, local self-governments  
Project reports

The theory of change assumes that prosperity and peaceful interethnic relations will mutually reinforce in the long run. Successful grassroots initiatives and enterprises motivate local self-governments to durably support participation, work harder on service provision to all their constituents regardless of ethnic background when advocated, and to accept the ethnic diversity of the youth taking part in these initiatives. However, there is a long way to go for the duty bearers to take an active part in peacebuilding between ethnicities, especially across the border. The project efforts need to be further sustained.

The initiatives implemented by the young people in the pilot regions were very popular among the local self-governments. The village heads and deputies involved in the implementation of the project appreciated how the project invested in the young generation in the regions:

**Quote (village head)**

*“The main outcome is that the young people from our municipality acquired new skills. It was a good opportunity for them. This is beneficial for the upbringing and general development of our youth.”*

Young interviewees appreciated the goodwill of the local authorities and see the agency it gives them, which they are ready to take. This kind of virtuous circle means that some preconditions for sustainability are in place in terms of intentions, mutual recognition and commitment.

**Quote (youth)**

*“We approached [the mayor] together with our mentors with our request. We needed to find premises before the pitching, to demonstrate the sustainability of the project. We were afraid that the mayor will consider us like small kids and wouldn’t support us. But he did support us – because if youth is developed, it will be an advantage for the mayor and the community too, since we help other young people, so it is kind of a chain.”*

Local authorities also welcomed and supported, to the extent possible, the legal aid initiatives. The commitment and quality of the law students involved, the high demand they created, the readiness of municipalities to retain the young law students, and the cooperation mechanisms put in place with the Law Faculties, form a conducive constellation for the continuation of an initiative that complements other youth empowerment activities, as it creates peaceful and legal avenues for conflict settlement.

As explained in Finding 12 and 13, the local self-government officials felt surprised and motivated by the engagement of the youth, and especially by the success of their social

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enterprises. This convinced them to support where they could, either in kind or financially. What is remarkable is that municipalities afforded this support to future-oriented initiative in a time of crisis (related to the COVID-19 pandemic), and of shortage of funds. For example, Kok-Serek municipality provided 140,000 soms of financial contribution and premises for the initiatives of the young people (renovation of the park and establishment of the radio centre). The municipality's budget is subsidised by the state, as the majority of the project locations.<sup>79</sup> The total budget of Kok-Serek municipality is 1.5 million soms which covers salaries of the municipal employees among other costs.<sup>80</sup> The municipality's contribution to the youth's projects is therefore very significant: over 9% of a constrained municipal budget<sup>81</sup> (not accounting for the modest additional funds provided by the state for infrastructure development in two villages which are at the border within this municipality). In spite of the shortage of funds, the local self-governments are planning to continue to support youth-led initiatives in 2021 and beyond, as also confirmed by local stakeholders during the interviews.

Modest local budget is among the reasons the village councils are not able to build on these initiatives systemically. Delayed disbursement of national budget towards the local self-governments, difficulty to raise funds at the municipal level, and in general the development of these regions, are long lasting issues. The situation only worsened with the lockdown measures due to the pandemic. Local authorities therefore welcome any support to local development, and they displayed strong commitment to continued cooperation with the project or its successor. The scarcity of local budget is therefore a double-edged factor: it could endanger the sustainability of the project's results if municipalities are incapable of supporting them in the long run, but it also increases their will to cooperate with future projects – in time, it could create more openness to acknowledge ethnic diversity, if that remains at the core of future projects' discourse. Without follow-up projects, the local self-governments, who do not really see interethnic relations as a priority, are extremely unlikely to pursue such efforts of their own initiative. They require, not only the spur of youth empowerment activities, but also a hook into more systemic national policies, including but not limited to that of the National Youth Agency.

During the project, the role of educational institutions was limited to consultation with individual teachers or school directors for the selection and support of youth teams, and to the Memorandums of Understanding between Law Faculties, legal clinics and village councils. So far, nothing systemic has been put in place with the Ministry of Education and its regional representations. There is a vast unexplored potential of school programmes, curriculum development on youth empowerment and diversity management, teacher training, cross-border and inter-province school interaction that needs to be explored in order to connect the dots of youth empowerment at the community level, youth participation in local self-government, interethnic relations and peaceful approach to diversity, and cross-border youth interaction.

CSOs are also decisive to carry the theory of change through to local stakeholders, and connect stakeholders at all levels. This project heavily relied on the implementing partners and their capacity, and some of them expressed the opinion that they sometimes lacked institutional support within this and similar projects. This would increase their ability to accompany a scaling up of youth-centred activities while pushing the cross-border and interethnic agendas higher on the stakeholders' priorities.

This strand of the project (interethnic cohesion through youth empowerment and participation in local self-government) represents the very core of the theory of change, the most acclaimed aspect of the project, and its trademark. In order not to betray the

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<sup>79</sup> 83% of village councils in the country receive subsidies from the state, source: <<http://longreads.cabar.asia/>> [05/01/2020].

<sup>80</sup> From the interview with the head of Kok-Serek municipality.

<sup>81</sup> Figure provided by the head of Kok-Serek municipality.

hopes of the stakeholders, and not to lose the momentum created, any successor project would have to pick it up, scale it up, and give it a stronger cross-border aspect.

**Finding 25:** With a wide variety of fields and methods, the project was exploratory. Impact will require follow up and prioritization.

#### Triangulated evidence basis

Project documents

Memorandums of Understanding

Focus Group discussions with United Nations Staff

Interviews with local duty bearers, mentors, teachers, CSOs representatives

The ultimate purposes of the project (interethnic cohesion, social peace in border areas and progress towards conflict settlement) are quite broad, and accordingly, the project activities tested (successfully) various ways of enabling change in those directions. This was an exploratory project, which resembled the inception phase of a multi-component programme. The project opened options and demonstrated what could be done. This was a valid approach for an “entry door” project, but if continued in the future, it would likely result in spreading resources too thin into scattered initiatives. Choices need to be made to prioritize only a few of the tested initiatives:

- Youth empowerment and interethnic youth dialogue within local communities (addressed in Finding 25 above);
- Youth cooperation across the border;
- Facilitation of cross-border interaction among duty bearers at local and national levels;
- Legal avenues for conflict resolution and access to rights (legal aid and similar) (addressed in Finding 25 above);
- Support to local service delivery, in particular through one-stop-shops and border crossing facilities.

Youth interaction and interaction among local self-governance officials across the border were limited to one-off events. Peer support among the youth and local officials of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan towards peaceful interethnic relations, empowerment and participation in local self-governance, have not yet taken place. However, the first attempts created positive precedents which could make larger follow-up initiatives easier to implement. It would be an important connector between the interethnic, cross-border, and youth-centred strands of the theory of change. It is also, if not a condition for changes to last, an additional element of sustainability. National strategic documents envisage to continue cooperation with Uzbekistan on Youth Agencies level. The project achieved ownership by the Youth agency through early engagement. There are some commitments for future cooperation among Youth Agencies across the border, but their realisation was altered by the pandemic. National level duty bearers report increasing diplomatic interaction: while this is hardly attributable to the project, it guarantees a conducive policy environment for local and regional level interactions to continue and pick up, enabled by the message delivered at national level. The resilience so far in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, and the aftermath of the last elections suggest that security and stability, a top-level assumption of the theory of change, are so far on track – although several interviewees pointed to the volatility of these factors, especially considering the elections on 10 January 2021. Finally,

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the United Nations Office in Kyrgyzstan can rely on an under-used asset: the presence of peer offices in the neighbouring countries. Securing a genuine cross-border component. In short, several conditions are now in place that are conducive to the success of a more ambitious cross-border peacebuilding agenda, from the national to the grassroots level.

Support to local level service delivery, particularly through one-stop-shop facilities is a promising pilot, but it would require massive support at a large scale, from the national to the local level, in order to be sustained. National authorities have backed these efforts up, as pointed in the project's annual report in 2019: "The State Registry Service of Kyrgyzstan and Ombudsman's office demonstrated readiness to work on follow-ups on the case-to-case basis within the period of the project and after the project ends."<sup>82</sup> At local level, a short regulation was adopted by the pilot village councils based on the Model provision: the state registry office delegated six functions to 234 village councils since 2020. However, only 11 work based on these agreements, including the pilot villages. This shows the will of the state registry office to establish such partnerships, but that the resources and capacity are not available. While improved service delivery, decentralisation and local public administration reform would certainly indirectly contribute to social peace and prosperity, which in turn are beneficial to peacebuilding, public administration reform goes well beyond peacebuilding. It requires legislative (and possibly constitutional) reforms, regulatory reforms, strategic planning for multilevel governance, civil servants capacity building, local infrastructure and networks, public finance management and local finance accountability reforms, etc... PBF-funded projects are clearly not the avenue to pursue such vast initiative, whether in terms of the magnitude of the funding required, or in terms of links to peacebuilding. If the United Nations and the Government of Kyrgyzstan decide to engage on this path, they will need much more sizeable funding sources, and a long, holistic joint strategic planning process.

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<sup>82</sup> Annual report 2019, p. 8.



# EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED





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## 6. EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED

### 6.1 Conclusions

The project “Promoting Kyrgyzstan’s youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan”, funded by the PBF, rested upon a coherent theory of change, which was built in a participatory way by UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP with the PBF and Agency for Youth based on solid conflict analysis. This theory of change complemented the empowerment of youth within their community in the south of the country and towards local self-governance bodies with capacity building for local self-governance officials and local service providers, as a vehicle to create positive experiences of interethnic and cross-border relations among the youth and among duty bearers from the national to the local level.

These multiple facets of the theory of change were meant to complement each other, but also to conciliate the various nuances of the Government’s, donor’s, and local self-government actors’ approach to peacebuilding. While Kyrgyz authorities at national and local level read peacebuilding chiefly through the lens of a border dispute and ensuing cross-border conflicts, the PBF and the United Nations Office in Kyrgyzstan identify interethnic relations within Kyrgyzstan as the other fundamental issue to be addressed. Local self-government, the youth and their communities, meanwhile, bowed to the approach of national authorities, while mostly embracing any initiative in support of youth entrepreneurship and activism, in remote and under-served border areas: interethnic or even cross-border conflict were secondary issues compared to social and economic development. Besides, and despite warming relations between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, embodied in national and inter-state strategic documents, the project designers anticipated difficulties around cross-border activities, and planned for a project implemented exclusively on the territory of Kyrgyzstan.

The theory of change and its monitoring framework had to be tweaked during implementation to overcome this dilemma while adjusting to the COVID-19 crisis. A joint exercise ensured, which gathered United Nations Agencies and implementing partners around methods, terminology and monitoring indicators. Beyond the sound adjustments this exercise enabled, stronger common understanding and values emerged, which constituted one of the keys of the project’s efficiency, resilience during the COVID-19 crisis and ability to convince.

The three United Nations agencies pooled their assets and mandate to champion this “test-run” project which explored many different avenues to find entry doors and realize the theory of change. This ambitious package. They planned, tried and tested methodologies such as the UPSHIFT programme, Leadership and Innovation Academy, Janyration Chakrygy Creative contest, cross-border events among youth and local self-government, legal aid and one-stop-shop municipal service provision. They successfully targeted a broad range of (at times hard to reach) stakeholders including the youth, their parents and teachers, community members, local self-governance bodies, national agencies from Kyrgyzstan and (to a lesser extent) Uzbekistan) and their regional chapters.

The resulting project design was coherent with the needs identified, but also hesitated between a fully Kyrgyzstan-internal, interethnic approach (relatively easily implemented but politically sensitive) and a cross-border approach (politically more acceptable but difficult to set afoot). In an effort to open inroads, it piloted a large number of different

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initiatives within a short timeframe and a relatively modest budget. This multiplicity of directions, while all contributing to a common peacebuilding purpose, at times lacked linkages and an anchor into broader national systems, such as the education system or public administration reform. Nevertheless, they resulted in stronger commitment and increased openness on the part of stakeholders, and a momentum of enthusiasm at the local level. Their concomitant implementation proved demanding, and it would have been possible without the strong synergy among United Nations Agencies, and between the United Nations and its committed implementing partners.

From the project design to its implementation and reporting, the three implementing United Nations Agencies, with the administrative lead of UNICEF, experimented with an exceptionally deep level of cooperation. Joint design, joint tendering, joint monitoring and reporting, co-implementation of activities converged to fully materialize the “delivering as one” approach. The experience was somewhat time consuming, as procedures had to be adjusted and joint decision making demanded long clearance and negotiations. Compounded by the COVID-19 crisis, which required profound adaptation to move most activities online, these delays weighed on the implementing partners and (to a lesser extent) participants, who had to rush into activities during the second half of the project despite a non-cost extension. However, the commitment of the implementing partners and the leverage of the United Nations agencies made it possible to intensify implementation and pick up a rhythm that some participants found exhilarating. The joint process made the most of UN agencies’ assets in terms back office, field presence, existing network of partners, reputation and political clout. The donor can trust in the value for money of the project. The momentum thus created will be precious for successor initiatives.

The project design aimed at inclusion of equity across what was identified as dividing lines in the society of the border provinces: ethnicity, gender, remoteness from urban centres. This project activities proved effectively inclusive and created unprecedented interethnic and gender-inclusive interactions, which left a strong impression on their participants. These positive experiences convinced the project stakeholders that diverse groups of youth can function together to create value for their communities. They elicited the trust of the parents, because the project involved them and treated them not as impediments to youth participation, but as accelerators.

The expected results were achieved. The participants displayed deep transformations in their attitudes towards the capacity of the youth to bring value to their community, towards interethnic and cross-border interaction. Youth appreciated their new-found roles as peace-making influencers, civic activists and entrepreneurs and are eager to continue investing in their community. Local and central governments enhanced equitable access to rights and to redress within the frame of modest but promising pilots. New cross-border cooperation experiences for State actors increased openness to new modes of cooperation. Political will snowballed, particularly at local level. Most visibly, the youth who participated in the project experienced it as a revealing experience of initiation into adulthood and self-leadership. The most spectacular transformations were witnessed among the most withdrawn, the most geographically isolated, and among young girls who discovered the roles they could take on. Some meaningful community development initiatives took place, led by the youth and supported by local self-government, such as legal clinics or new inclusive community venues.

The commitment and individual transformations are evident; however, they now require sustained and more systemic support to spill over and measurably contribute to social cohesion, prosperity and peace in the border areas. The United Nations Office in Kyrgyzstan will need to carry on pooling the assets and expertise of its agencies, government and local partners and implementing partners, as well as the mobilizing capacity of the Office in Uzbekistan, to focus its peacebuilding initiative more precisely while scaling up to a more systemic level.

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## 6.2 Lessons Learned

1. A streamlined, precise focus is difficult to define in peacebuilding projects because the realm of factors that influence conflict or peace, and that can be acted upon, is very broad. The stakeholders of peace are varied and likely to have diverging priorities. Peacebuilding projects therefore must often compose with dilemmas through complex decision making, and a fluctuating environment: no matter how well grounded in conflict analysis, their theories of change are likely to require adjustment during implementation. In reaction, this project acknowledged its dilemmas and addressed it with a strong institutional learning moment: the mid-term monitoring workshops were the occasion to 1°) discuss terminologies, 2°) unpack the theory of change and 3°) adjust indicators against the backdrop of the realities of the project. This cathartic moment was instrumental to realign the approach of the three United Nations agencies and the implementing partners, to prepare them for better results-based monitoring and reporting, and to make them ready in the face of a major crisis in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic (which is transposable to other domestic or international crisis, a plausible event in peacebuilding context). A mid-term monitoring and evaluation workshop channelling the reflexion of all implementers is an easily reproducible good practice. Re-tracing the logical links between the levels of the theory of change at an early stage enables a project team to consciously identify the specific strategies and problematic points, in this case respectively interethnic and cross-border issues. Working on such clarifications at an early stage simplifies multi-actor complex decision making. However, in this project, these events were organised late: organised at the end of an inception period, they would have had better effects on the alignment of the actors, on reporting, and possibly on swift decision making including on administrative aspects. Recognising early on in the project the extent of cooperation needed, would enable to identify likely points of contention in administrative processes, and anticipate the corresponding procedures. For instance, a joint project with a joint tender means that the Terms of Reference and the main lines must be formulated by the beginning of the intervention. This way, the collaboration with the implementing partners can start in the early stages.
2. UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP embarked on this joint project with a high level of cooperation (beyond mere coordination or parallel implementation). While this is clearly a good and rare example of the “delivering as one” approach, in which the three United Nations agencies displayed genuine good will and creativity from Country Team to field office level, they faced the constraints of their different internal processes and procedures. Joint tendering, while absolutely worthwhile as it catalysed synergies, was particularly lengthy. It resulted (compounded by the COVID-19 crisis) into delays in implementation, an unreasonable rush during the last few months of the project, and unnecessary strain on the implementing partners.
3. The project, while targeting cross-border interactions and anticipating difficulties in mobilizing partners from the Uzbekistan side, did not involve the United Nations Office in the neighbouring country. This was a missed opportunity. In any project with a cross-border component, United Nations agencies need to systematically consult with their peers in the neighbouring country during project design, coordinate and exchange regular information during implementation, and build on the existing network and partnerships of the neighbouring Country Team to gather support to mobilize counterparts across the border.
4. The project was intended as a door opener, and it indeed opened many doors, but in doing so it spread itself too thin. Each initiative had a very small budget, which created expectations and momentum, but also risks eliciting disappointment. Grassroot level peacebuilding projects, while hearing and understanding the needs and aspirations

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of the stakeholders, cannot cater to all: they need to prioritize, at least to some extent, from the onset. For instance, while the one-stop-shops were an interesting experiment, they did not receive sufficient funding, preparation and holistic attention to have meaningful and sustainable impact beyond individual human stories. The project prepared guidebooks but the regulations are not in place. Only a full-fledged public administration reform and decentralisation programme is in a position to address these needs. Peacebuilding projects can make inroads into systemic changes, in areas that directly address the key conflict drivers in targeted areas locally – but they cannot serve to test other, broader reform projects that do not directly relate to peacebuilding.

5. The project recognised that parents, community members and influencers such as teachers, can impede children’s participation, empowerment, and interethnic interactions, unless they are prepared. It was excellent practice to assume parents could instead act as accelerator, to involve them in several key activities, and to offer them empowerment and capacity building. At the same time, the project’s action on
6. other part of the assumption, that is to say the involvement of teachers and schools, lagged behind. Collaboration of the Ministry of Education is necessary, and in this case their reluctance could not be overcome. Youth-oriented projects need to strongly engage education institutions from the start as relays and multipliers, in an effort to systematize youth empowerment activities with them.
7. Conflict analysis states that youth unemployment counts among the biggest threats to peace.<sup>83</sup> However, the project easily avoided the pitfall of menial and precarious employment<sup>84</sup> from the design onwards, by putting strong emphasis on consultation and focusing on youth participation and empowerment rather than just employability. This was due to consultations with beneficiaries and using these insights in the design of the project. This good practice could be transposed whenever peacebuilding is approached via youth empowerment.
8. The evaluation team missed explicit data on ethnicity of participants. If ethnic inclusion is one of the objectives of the project, then it must be systematically measured, as it was for gender in an exemplary manner.
9. The initial consultation of youth during the design phase increased relevance and enabled to target employability along the youth’s aspirations while avoiding the common pitfall of menial, unqualified work. This was due to the GYPI funding is a competitive process, and integration of GYPI guidelines in the theory of change of the project, but this approach can serve as good practice for other projects, regardless of the source of funding.

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<sup>83</sup> Jantzi, Terrence, Fernanda Faria, and Anara Alymkulova, Evaluation of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Project Portfolio In Kyrgyzstan, Evaluation Report, 31 August 2017, <<http://kg.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/kyrgyzstan/docs/General/UNPBF%20Kyrgyzstan%20ER%20Final%20-%2031%20August%202017.pdf>> [29/12/2020], p. X.

<sup>84</sup> “Youth resilience for peace”, General Assembly Security Council, 72nd session, agenda item 65, Peacebuilding and sustainable peace, 02/03/2018, pp. 13-14.

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## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations laid out below were discussed and validated in three steps:

- In the Evaluation Reference Group meeting (11 December 2020) the evaluation team requested suggestions on possible recommendations.
- In the Focus Group Discussion with UN staff (17 December 2020) the preliminary recommendations and their feasibility were put to scrutiny
- Upon completion of the first draft of the final report, UNICEF staff and the Evaluation Reference Group commented on the recommendations, both in terms of content and structure.

The recommendations are presented in order of priority for each intended user.

### 7.1 United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

1. In order to capitalize on the opportunities created by this project, the PBF should continue supporting youth empowerment projects as vehicles for peacebuilding in Kyrgyzstan along with neighbouring countries.

Rationale of the recommendation: The donor should continue to support youth empowerment in Kyrgyzstan as an effective and efficient means to implement the priorities of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan. This aspect was acclaimed as the core of this project, and as transformative force for communities. At this stage, it has not reached out to a critical mass of stakeholders and is therefore unlikely to spill over on its own towards a measurable contribution to peace. A momentum was created that should not be let down. Expectations are high, which also creates opportunities, through the empowerment of diverse youth in diverse communities, to secure better recognition of interethnic relations as the root causes of the conflict as identified in the PBF conflict analysis. However, having several parallel projects in each country of the region does not appear as an optimal solution: projects in Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have all created new opportunities, and have boosted the capacities of the United Nations agencies and their partners in the three countries. The PBF could be a catalyst to channel funding into follow-up projects. For instance, the Government of Uzbekistan was ready to contribute with a consequent budget to the project, on par with the PBF. A regional project would achieve economies of scale, build on new opportunities, cross-fertilize experience among the three countries and among United Nations agencies and Country Teams, and smooth clearance for cross-border events.

Operational suggestions:

- See Recommendation 3.

2. The PBF should consider setting up an online community of practice on peacebuilding projects accessible to its recipients.

Rationale of the recommendation: The PBF publishes a corpus of useful resources on conflict analysis and peacebuilding interventions, several of which are quoted in this evaluation. These documents provide a backup to funding recipients for their conflict analysis and project design. However, they do not easily access good practices, experiences, lessons learned, peer advice and partnership opportunities. It is symptomatic that even the United Nations Office in Kyrgyzstan did not peer up with its counterparts in neighbouring countries



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to inspire this project and explore a great potential of synergy. Although demanding in terms of setup and maintenance, a community of practice facilitated by the PBF, which is at the same time a donor and a centre of thematic expertise, could inspire better linkages and a learning community of implementers. The community of practice could also provide the shell for eventual results-based monitoring and evaluation for the PBF.

#### Operational suggestions:

- This online tool could contain a library (as currently does the PBF's website), a database of past and ongoing projects, a repository of good practices and lessons learned associated to their success/hindering factors, a peer support space, and possibly an interactive results-based monitoring and reporting space.
- The PBF could start with a feasibility study, to assess the needs and expectations of its recipients for such a facility, and the necessary resources (human and financial) to set it up and maintain it. This study should benchmark with other communities of practice (e.g. DCAF/ISSAT community of practice, which has proved successful among users, monitoring-and-evaluation communities of practice within the United Nations and evaluation societies) and results-based management tools (e.g. OHCHR's PMS, Council of Europe PMM, or European Union OPSYS) to identify the level of publicity for each type of information/each space within the platform (e.g. public/restricted to members/restricted to project manager and PBSO), the metadata necessary for the project database, good examples of peer support spaces, lessons learned, do's and don'ts, factors that ease setup, facilitation and maintenance, and factors that improve users' experience.
- The PBF could then mobilise technical expertise, overseen by a reference group of potential users (fund recipients and PBSO staff) to design a pilot version, and test this version with a small number of recipients to fine tune its structure, contents and maintenance modalities before full deployment.

## 7.2 United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan

3. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and any other relevant agency such as UN Women) should initiate a regional, modular follow-up youth empowerment and peacebuilding programme with its peers in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Rationale of the recommendation: The evaluation found that the project created a momentum on youth empowerment for both interethnic relations and cross-border relations – albeit at a modest scale – with a broad range of actors: the youth and their communities around them (parents, teachers, some community leaders), the local self-governments, the regional representations of some national agencies, and some key national actors, as well as the civil society and private actors who implemented the project. In addition, the project is surrounded by other comparable projects within Kyrgyzstan and in the neighbouring countries (such as the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan cross-border project involving both Country Teams), at a time of gradual rapprochement between the three countries. The UN should boost and catalyse these dynamics. Now is the right time to be go a step further with a regional programme, rather than go for small parallel projects with limited sustainability. Such programme will need to pool the efforts made by the United Nations along with the Government, local self-government and civil society partners in the three countries, while affording the flexibility to tailor the outputs to the situation in each country and location.

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### Operational suggestions:

- If the PBF expresses interest in a regional project, the United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should reach out to its peers in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, to jointly analyse the architecture and outcomes of their respective initiatives on youth empowerment towards peacebuilding, and identify the objectives and key components of their follow up projects. A “task force” integrating the PBSO in the three countries could be a good vehicle for this exercise.
- If the PBF, or other United Nations Country teams disagree to engage in a regional project, then the United Nations Kyrgyzstan Country Team should design a successor project in Kyrgyzstan building on the experience of the present project and the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan youth empowerment project, in close consultation with their peers in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.
- Regional or not, the successor project could be built around a common core component centred on youth empowerment at the local level, using the key youth empowerment tools tried and tested through previous projects. UPSHIFT and LIA for instance are good platforms for interethnic and cross-border activities. All United Nations Agencies involved should take an active part in this common core component.
- To complement the common core component, the successor project should design optional thematic modules on sub-themes or parallel issues such as (i) the role of public services and access to rights for inclusion, social cohesion and ultimately peacebuilding; (ii) legal redress and para-legal mediation mechanisms, (iii) cross-border cooperation opportunities for youth agencies; (iv) education to/for diversity. These modules should be designed by the United Nations Country Teams in consultation with the PBSO and the counterparts among national authorities, local self-government and civil society. Each Country Team in agreement with its national/local partners should be able to opt in or out of these modules for each border area. The uptake of the respective modules by each individual United Nations agency within each Country Team should be decided on a case-to-case basis.
- The United Nations Country Teams should reach out to the Western Balkan PBF regional project (led by Albania UN Country Team) for examples, good practices and lessons learned on a regional peacebuilding project centred on youth empowerment.
- The young participants and mentors of the present project could serve as relays for future activities (act as mentors and engage in peer-to-peer transfer of knowledge, organise and facilitate workshops).
- Cross-border aspects could include mini-twinning among youth groups, but also among community projects involving youth groups CSOs, local self-governance bodies and other service providers from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan.

#### 4. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should streamline pilot initiatives into systemic, peacebuilding partnerships with key duty bearers.

Rationale of the recommendation: This project has made many inroads into, and built bridges between, social and ethnic integration, conflict management, youth civic participation, access to justice and public services. This multiplicity of initiatives and promising experiments now need to be weeded out and streamlined into fewer components that focus on key priorities. In addition, this project has elicited support and started partnerships for ad hoc grassroot actions. The stakeholders of this project were well identified, and their involvement should be continued or consolidated: State Youth Agency, Ministry of Education and Science, State Agency for Local Self Governance and interethnic relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Justice. These nascent or growing partnerships between the United Nations

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agencies, CSOs, and duty bearers need to mature into issue-focused alliances welded by clear, long term, systemic objectives: this way, grassroots initiatives will be connected to systemic reform issues through the most relevant duty bearers accompanied by CSOs. The follow up programme (preferably within a regional programme as described above) should therefore enable UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP (and any other United Nations agency relevant to the follow up project, such as UN Women) to negotiate common strategic objectives and roadmaps with the key duty bearers. This process should allow, in turn, to mainstream inclusion and diversity (gender, ethnic, social...) into the efforts of these select public services, identified as most crucial for social cohesion – which in turn will contribute to peacebuilding.

#### Operational suggestions:

- Pool the UPSHIFT, LIA and other grassroots youth empowerment initiatives as the common core of the project, and engage CSOs, local self-governance bodies and the State Agency for Local Self Government and Interethnic Relations into a formal partnership (MoU-type) containing a “menu” of tools and activities, from which each community will be able to select the most suitable blend of activities.
- Invest in priority into a strategic partnership with the Ministry of Education as the other key relay (beside local self-governance bodies and the State Agency for Local Self Government) between the grassroots and systemic levels. A joint strategy should particularly focus on making small and politically acceptable, yet tactical and carefully crafted contributions to the curricula in order to mainstream the life skills supported by UPSHIFT and LIA (including tolerance); on capacity building for teachers on these skills; on facilitation of the relationships between school administrations and CSOs/ local self-governance bodies/youth groups towards local mini-projects that support inclusion and empowerment. The experience of UNICEF in Albania could be a source of inspiration. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education and Youth of Osh, valid until November 2021, also offers a good precedent.
- The legal aid experiment run by this project should inspire a more systemic approach. The structure put in place with the memorandums between universities, local councils and legal aid clinics (whereby law students could put their studies in practice with non-judicial redress) could be multiplied, but will also require a more systemic approach jointly with the Ministry of Justice and the other actors of the judicial system.
- A module on civil society institutional development support should be created, targeting implementing partners and other potential facilitators from among civil society organisations.
- The common core and modules should all include a strong gender component, based on module-specific gender analysis. The gender components should go beyond participation of women and girls to the project and discussion of gender as a topic: it should target gender transformative results for the common core and for each module.
- The one-stop shop initiative, while very promising from a decentralised public administration reform standpoint, would require an entire, long-term, public administration reform support project with very serious funding, which clearly goes well beyond the scope of a peacebuilding project. If pursued, it should not be within a PBF-funded project.

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## 5. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should introduce gender transformative results to the successor project, based on gender analysis and in consultation or cooperation with UN Women.

Rationale for the recommendation: The project put a lot of emphasis on women participation and on putting gender issues on the discussion table with the youth. It had some encouraging gender transformative results, in terms of empowerment of girls in particular. However, the project did not conduct full-fledged gender analysis, of its various components (what specific roles and interests women and girls have in a given dynamic situation as opposed to men and boys; how the problems being addressed affect women and girls, and men and boys respectively, perhaps differently from each other). Neither did it set specific gender transformative results as a part of its results framework.

### Operational suggestions:

- Any follow up project should at least consult with UN Women in Kyrgyzstan, to conduct gender analysis on the various aspects of the project, and plan for gender transformative results.
- UN Women and other agencies should consider joint implementation of this follow up project, with UN Women contributing, in particular, expertise regarding women in conflict and peacebuilding.
- The GYPI guidelines and UN SWAP can serve as guiding tools to target gender transformative results in an inclusive fashion from the project design phase.

## 6. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should re-define target age groups of youth empowerment programmes in border areas towards adolescents and very young adults (up to 20 years) in addition to the original target group (up to 28 years), with emphasis on women/girls and vulnerable groups, and tailor activities accordingly.

Rationale of the recommendation: Owing to widespread labour migration of young adults in the targeted communities, the project encountered difficulties finding young adults (initially the core target group, up to 28 years old), and had to refocus on adolescents and very young adults. Follow up projects in the border areas should take this factor into account, by refocusing the bulk of activities towards adolescents and very young adults (up to 20 years old), while offering some activities to young adults (20 to 28 years old)

### Operational suggestion:

- For the youngest target group (up to 20 years old): focus on life skills, diversity management and conflict in the school and extra-curricular environment. Adjust the content of UPSHIFT and LIA programmes to the capacities of the target group.
- For young adults, maintain the existing offer of activities, with stronger focus on employability, self-entrepreneurship, management of diversity at work, and legal aid.
- Place particular emphasis on youth belonging to national minorities, youth who dropped out of schools, and women and girls in all target groups and sub-groups, especially in terms of identification and mobilisation. This applies first and foremost to girls who dropped out of school, and who are subject to/at risk of early marriage. CSOs, community leaders (especially participants of past programmes) and service providers beyond school (e.g. medical and para-medical professional, social workers, civil registry officers) could be instrumental for outreach to these groups.

## 7. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should maintain selected activities online beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

Rationale of the recommendation: The transfer of most activities online was swift and efficient within this project. While some online activities offered less opportunities for

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genuine interaction among youth of diverse ethnicities, gender, social background or across the border, others increased the ability of implementing partners and youth to work together on a more regular basis, with a larger number of participants, across borders and provinces at a lower cost, and with more acceptance from the side of parents and public officials. For instance, some persons belonging to ethnic minorities may feel safer to participate online than in person. Besides, the COVID-19-related restrictions will most likely last for the foreseeable future, which requires the maintenance of online activities.

- The follow up project should maintain those online activities which implementing partners consider are most worthwhile, such as some LIA and UPSHIFT events, videos, debate competitions, etc.
- In order to ensure equity in access to the project, the United Nations agencies and implementing partners should continue to support internet access for the beneficiaries in the pragmatic ways explored during the project (e.g. top-up of mobile phone internet access), and by prioritizing youth initiatives that increase internet coverage. Those in need of support could be identified with the help of mentors, youth from the first iteration of the project, and teachers.

#### 8. The United Nations Country Team in Kyrgyzstan should anticipate and accelerate joint procurement and other administrative processes linked to joint implementation

Rationale of the recommendation: this project pioneered, within the United Nations Office in Kyrgyzstan, genuine joint implementation among UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA. This experience showed that this deep cooperation does pool assets and expertise, which in turn contributes to the quality of outputs, solidity of results, and likelihood of impact. However, this came at the cost of lengthy and demanding adjustment of procedures and negotiation, was particularly visible as regards tendering for implementing partners, and led to significant delays.

##### Operational suggestions:

- Learning from this experience, such delays can be avoided in the future by anticipating the most cumbersome administrative processes and involving/consulting the support services (finance, human resource, procurement, communication) in the project design process : they could help predict possible bottlenecks and preempt them for the future preparation of terms of reference for experts, service providers and implementing partners, agreement on the bid/proposal assessment and selection criteria, definition of selection modalities, and division of labor within the United Nations for the procedure.
- Support services (human resources, finance, procurement, communication within the United Nations Office in Kyrgyzstan) can create and maintain a small step-by-step guide on how to approach such procedures when they are co-implemented by several agencies (e.g.: How to conduct a joint tender procedure?)

### 7.3 Duty bearers: Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Municipalities and Service Providers

#### 9. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, in particular the State Agency for Regional Development should support the efforts of the State Registry Service of Kyrgyzstan and Ombudsperson's office.

Rationale of the recommendation: In the frame of the legal aid component of the project, the State Registry Service of Kyrgyzstan and Ombudsperson's office demonstrated readiness to enhance the identification of persons, including those belonging to minority groups, who lack access to rights, entitlements and services due to civil registration issues. Through the legal aid component of the project, they have deepened their understanding



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of rights holders' needs, and their outreach. They now require encouragement and the means to follow through.

#### Operational suggestions:

- Both offices should carry on identifying rights holders deprived of their rights due to registration issues in the border areas, including from among ethnic minorities.
- The State Agency for Regional Development should support their work by intensifying its cooperation with United Nations peacebuilding projects, supporting legal aid initiatives locally (who could in turn refer rights holders to the Registry Service and Ombudsperson's Office).

#### 10. The Government of Kyrgyzstan, the Presidential Office, and Ministry of Education should facilitate and support systematic involvement of educational institutions in peacebuilding initiatives and youth empowerment, especially in border areas.

Rationale of the recommendation: The commitment of the State Youth agency to the project was exemplary. In contrast, and partly because of the project design, the role of the education system was modest, although their participation is essential to entrench acceptance of diversity. The prevalence of labour migration and youth unemployment prove that the participation of school and university students in this sort of project activities is relevant and beneficial, particularly in border regions – however, it needs to be facilitated systemically by the education system. The effects of such projects can also be multiplied by the introduction of the relevant skillset within the schools.

#### Operational suggestions:

- Consider a memorandum of understanding and associated roadmap on cooperation towards youth empowerment and peacebuilding between the Ministry of Education and Science and the United Nations Country Team (or a recipient agency).
- A scholarship scheme could pave the way: the State could create an incentive by subsidising young people's studies in relevant disciplines for public administration, in return for which the students commit to taking up a posting in an underserved community for a fixed amount of time after they graduate.

#### 11. The Government of Kyrgyzstan should consider the creation of a peacebuilding national platform.

Rationale for the recommendation: the Project Steering Group (composed of representatives of the State Agency on Youth, the State Agency on Inter-Ethnic Relations and Local Self-Governance, now the newly formed State Agency for Regional Development, and the Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic, Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Province Administrations, Assembly of the Peoples of Kyrgyzstan, civil society experts and others) offers a shell to establish an informal dialogue platform on peacebuilding, which would encourage ministries who missed past opportunities to join in, contribute with their expertise and fulfil their respective mandate. Such platform could also attract further donor funding for peacebuilding initiatives.

#### Operational suggestions:

- Convey a permanent peacebuilding platform based on the composition of the late Project Steering Group, including also the Ministry of Education and Science, State Agency for Regional Development,, Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Justice, and any other relevant Ministry.
- The platform could report progress and strategic suggestions to the Presidential Office and the United Nations Resident Coordinator on a regular basis.

- The Ministry of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic should keep up the relations with its Uzbek counterpart, based on the Memorandum of Understanding. It should establish a similar memorandum with the Youth Agency in Tajikistan, and consider stepping up to a tripartite memorandum at medium term, to normalise cross-border activities in the region.
- State Agency for Regional Development, in support of the efforts of the State Registry Service of Kyrgyzstan and Ombudsperson's office, should strengthen regional cooperation.
- Bilateral interactions, whenever relevant, should not be isolated but involve all relevant entities of the Kyrgyz State. This points at a high cooperation between the Youth agency and Ministry of Education, and to ensure a coordinated peacebuilding effort, with catalytic effects on both sides of the border.

## 7.4 CSOs and other implementing partners

### 12. Implementing partners should continue to develop their capacity to reach out to remote, vulnerable groups in border areas.

Rationale for the recommendation: the project was a great opportunity for implementing partners to explore the needs and aspiration of remote, underserved border communities, particularly their youth. Implementing partners also appreciated the benefits in terms of outreach, enrichment of their portfolio of activities and expertise, and funding opportunities. These benefits should be further invested in the most remote communities in border areas, and continuously documented.

- Implementing partners should target particularly hard-to-reach and vulnerable groups such as girls and young women in remote location and/or exposed to early marriage, youth who dropped out of school, representatives of national minorities, foreign citizens, persons lacking basic documentation to access their rights, persons with disabilities, and intersections of these vulnerabilities.
- They should identify and collaborate with other CSOs representing some of these groups or advocating for relevant issues, if any. Such stakeholders would help prioritise and proactively maintain specific diversity and vulnerability issues on the agenda of future projects.
- Improve monitoring framework by collecting disaggregated data by age, gender and majority/minority background, and checking against double entries. This will serve for future project design and fundraising, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

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## 9. ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions	Sub-questions	Indicators	Data collection methods	Data sources
Relevance	1. To what extent were the project results relevant to the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries, especially of the young women and men?	<p>To what extent were the design and objectives of the project based on solid conflict analysis?</p> <p>To what extent and how have the issue of equity, gender and human rights been integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the project activities?</p>	<p>Extent to which insights from conflict analysis are reflected in the theory of change of the project</p> <p>Number of people from vulnerable groups, foremost young women, were consulted on or associated with the drafting and design of the project.</p> <p>Extent to which the beneficiaries feel the project activities were relevant and accessible to them and others (Accessibility, Child/Youth sensitivity)</p> <p>Correspondences between the issues and needs raised by direct and indirect beneficiaries, and the logic of the project</p>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Social media analysis</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Focus group with beneficiaries</p> <p>Local case studies</p>	<p>Publications/guiding documents of UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, PBF</p> <p>UNSC Resolutions</p> <p>Other UN publications on peacebuilding</p> <p>Social media in Kyrgyzstan, in particular in the regions targeted by the project</p> <p>Interviews with UN agencies involved in the project, PBF, beneficiaries, experts</p> <p>Interviews with complementary informants (CSO project partners, parents, community members)</p> <p>Country reports, shadow reports (OSCE, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Crisis Group)</p> <p>Programming documents</p> <p>Monitoring of international obligations (UPR, UNCRC report)</p>

	2. To what extent is the project based on a logical Theory of Change and how coherent was it in practice?	To what extent was the project's theory of change internally coherent and consistent with strategic approach of PBF to conflict?  How has the project's theory of change evolved over time?	Extent to which the theory of change mobilized peacebuilding expertise  Incidences of integration of new factors and trends throughout action implementation, into the theory of change  Number of adaptations to the theory of change and intervention techniques in response to the COVID19 situation		UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, PBF, and UN-wide publications, reports and guidelines  National strategic documents  United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) and UNSCR 2419 (2018) and further UN documents on youth and peace building  Programme documents  Interview and brainstorming with UNICEF and other UN staff (project team in particular)
Effectiveness	3. To what extent have the expected results of the project been achieved on the output level?	Have the young men and women in the KY border areas become influencers, civic activists and entrepreneurs?  Have the young men and women in border areas, their parents and community members increased their understanding of, and support for diversity?  Have local and central governments	Number and variety of youth-led initiatives involving cooperation between youth of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (disaggregated by gender)  Share of interviewed youth, parents and local communities who display support towards diversity and youth-led initiatives  Extent to which stakeholders experience an increase in services provided by the local institutions (disaggregated by gender)  Number of people from vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups, (people belonging to national minorities, young women), who were able to participate in the project initiatives (disaggregated)  Number and tone of mentions of concrete applications of leadership, analytical thinking, legal, media	Document review  Focus groups  Semi-structured interviews  Local case studies	Project documentation  Project website  Proceeds of events organized by the projects  Social media in Kyrgyzstan, in particular in the regions targeted by the project  Interviews with UN agencies involved in the project, beneficiaries, experts  Interviews with complementary informants (Ombudsman's office, prosecution office, territorial divisions of the State Registry Service, law enforcement, legal aid, CSO project partners, parents, community members)  Annual municipal plans and budgets in local case studies

		enhanced people's access to services and justice, and trust-building initiatives? (equity, gender)	literacy, conflict management and teambuilding skills (gender) Examples of priority issues raised by youth before the local government transferred into projects/plans/budgetary commitments by LSG bodies		
Efficiency	4. To what extent have the project implementers optimized their assets and comparative advantages?	To what extent did the peacebuilding approach enable UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the PBF to ensure coherence, synergies and joint operation in design and implementation of the project? To what extent does the management structure of the project support efficiency for programme implementation and achievement of results? To what extent are the monitoring mechanisms in	Degree of satisfaction of implementing staff and cooperation partners about coordination among project implementers and partners Level of clarity of the distribution of project areas between the UN agencies according to specific competence and mandate Occurrences of mentions of duplication in interviews and documents Extent to which project indicators coincide with the ToC of the project Share of activities implemented within planned timeframe Number of examples of reaction and adaptation of action according to monitoring findings	Document review Local case studies Semi-structured interviews Budget assessment	Project documents, reports and products Agreement documents with stakeholders Programme documents from the UN Peacebuilding Funds' (PBF) Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative Interview responses Working plan of the project Project reports Financial data of the project

		place effective in measuring and informing management of the project performance and progress towards the targets?			
	5. To what extent were interventions under this project complementary, harmonized, coordinated with the government's and other peacebuilding actors' interventions?	To what extent is the project coherent with key national development strategies, including in the area of peacebuilding, and youth empowerment?  How has the project coordinated with key conflict and peacebuilding actors?	Extent to which the project's theory of change and project documents overlap with Kyrgyz strategic documents  Extent to which the project's theory of change and project documents overlap with CSOs' objectives and activities  Share of stakeholders considering that the project enabled and/or expanded other peacebuilding activities (in particular concerning gender, human rights and equity)	Document review  Focus groups  Semi-structured interviews  Local case studies	Strategic documents: Joint action plan 2017-2019; Respective province action plan of cooperation (cf. ToR, p. 1-2); State Agency for Youth and Sport: Memorandum of Understanding (joint action plan with UZ counterpart)  Interviews with complementary informants (CSO project partners, parents, community members)  Programming documents  Project progress reports  Internal notes  Correspondence  Peacebuilding strategic documents  CSOs project reports  RUNO & CSOs cooperation projects in Peacebuilding Fund in Kyrgyzstan under the Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative
Impact	6. How effective have the project strategies and approaches	How did young women and men contribute to social cohesion and	Extent to which an inclusive (gender, interethnic) dialogue within KY and across the KY-UZ border is mentioned by interviewees and in which terms (qualitative)	Local case studies  Document review	Informants' responses and experiences (especially in sampled municipalities, and at national level)



	<p>been in contributing to peace and stability in border areas?</p>	<p>peacebuilding in their communities or beyond?</p> <p>Do Kyrgyz youth and relevant government agencies collaborate and further develop cooperation plans to improve positive interactions with their Uzbek counterparts?</p> <p>How has the intervention contributed to economic and social stability and prosperity in Kyrgyz border areas?</p>	<p>Degree of satisfaction of the beneficiaries concerning the possibility to channel their complaints and grievances linked with the quality of the services provided by the local institutions (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>Instances of established business processes, and partnerships (disaggregated by gender)</p> <p>List of most significant changes reported by interviewees</p> <p>Positive tone of social media entries regarding cross-border and interethnic interactions</p>	<p>Social media analysis</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p> <p>Focus groups</p>	<p>Media coverage of the project and of the regions concerned</p>
Sustainability	<p>7. How likely is it that UNICEF's contribution to peacebuilding at the Kyrgyz/Uzbek borders will last in the long run?</p>	<p>Do the youth have the means to implement change in their community after the closure of the project?</p> <p>How effectively has the project generated national and</p>	<p>Financial sustainability of partner CSOs (self-reported)</p> <p>Level of consensus on principles of diversity, inclusion, interethnic and cross-border cooperation among interviewed stakeholders and in social media</p> <p>Instances of plans expressed by interviewed change agents to continue cooperation plans towards UZYouth</p>	<p>Local case studies</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Social media analysis</p> <p>Semi-structured interviews</p>	<p>Policy framework of the Government of Kyrgyzstan, and relevant legislation, if any</p> <p>Public reports of relevant CSOs, NHRIs, international organisations, as well as reports and shadow reports pertaining to peacebuilding, social peace in the border areas, and youth-led actions</p> <p>Interviews with UN staff, CSO project partners, local government representatives</p>

		<p>local ownership of the results achieved?</p> <p>To what extent do the project partners have institutional capacity to carry on with the core activities and outputs of the project?</p>	and UZ government agencies	Focus groups	Social media in Kyrgyzstan, in particular in the regions targeted by the project, in Kyrgyz language and Russian
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## ANNEX 2: Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders	Involvement in the project	Interest in the evaluation	Potential role in peacebuilding
Donor: PBF	Funding, Participation in design and monitoring and evaluation	Summative and formative project evaluation for the assessment of the investment and future follow-up funding	Funding Network Guidance Theoretical framework
<b>Implementing agencies</b>			
UNICEF	<p>The leading implementing agency of the project and the lead agency for the coordination, organizing the process of joint planning of the project as well as joint monitoring and reporting. UNICEF organized systematic coordination meetings with participation of the Recipient UN Organizations (RUNOs).</p> <p>UNICEF used UPSHIFT methodology for youth empowerment and capacity development purposes. In addition to youth, UNICEF has trained Youth State Agency staff at national and local levels on Results Based management as well as youth-centred planning and budgeting.</p> <p>To support two-way dialogue between Kyrgyz and Uzbek youth, UNICEF has led the national level events and activities with participation of youth from both countries.</p>	<p>Hiring agency, evaluation management, logistical support, contact point for evaluation team, interviews of project staff, focus group discussion, participation in Evaluation Reference Group.</p> <p>Project assessment (summative evaluation)</p> <p>organisational learning</p> <p>recommendations for future projects (formative evaluation)</p> <p>cf. evaluation purpose</p>	<p>Implement the Peacebuilding Priority Plan for 2017-2020. The new PPP defines three interlinked outcomes, recognized as building blocks of interventions for preventing violent extremism in the Kyrgyz Republic. The three outcomes will be implemented through six UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, UNODC, UNFPA and UN OHCHR). The six agencies have a comparative advantage in addressing the risks of radicalization and violent extremism.</p> <p>Outcome 1: Justice and security sector institutions, national and local authorities apply socially inclusive approaches, participatory decision-making and guarantee increased civic space (UNDP, UNICEF, OHCHR, UN Women).</p> <p>Outcome 2. Penitentiary and probation officers, as well as the police and forensic experts, are able to</p>
UNDP	The implementing agency. Launched Community Service Centres; delivered trainings for law enforcement on gender and age-sensitive human rights;	<p>Project assessment (summative evaluation)</p> <p>organisational learning</p>	prevent and address radicalization to violence by ensuring adequate safeguards respecting national and international standards (UNODC, UNDP).

	coordinated Youth-to-Youth primary legal support based on the memorandums between the Association of legal clinics, LSGs & Universities; coordinated and build capacity of community-based lawyers, set up referral mechanisms for municipal services; Police training; supported development of the COVID-19-related human rights monitoring tools for Ombudsman's office; youth activities related to the development of the critical /design thinking, Peace MediaLab, youth legal awareness activities allowing to promote legal ways to address grievances	recommendations for future projects (formative evaluation)	Outcome 3: Women and men, boys and girls in target communities take a more critical stance on ideologies instigating violence and have a better sense of belonging to their communities and participate in local development and dialogues over PVE. (UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women).
UNFPA	The implementing agency. Capacity building of youth, Leadership and Innovation Academy, Online Make-a-thon, parenting programme (trainings for parents), mentorship programme, informational work on social allowances	Project assessment (summative evaluation) organisational learning recommendations for future projects (formative evaluation)	
<b>Government decision-makers and duty bearers</b>			
State Agency for Youth and Sports of Kyrgyzstan	The main project partner. The project was drawn from the State Agency of Youth's suggestions and developed based on their inputs	Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for further youth and peace-building activities	The goal of the Agency is to develop and realize the potential of youth, develop physical culture and sports in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Agency develops and implements state policies in the areas of youth development, physical culture and sports.
State Agency for Youth of Uzbekistan (officially established in August 2020)	Project partner	Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for further youth and peace-building activities	The goal of the Agency is to develop and realize the potential of youth in Uzbekistan. The Agency develops and implements state policies in the areas of youth development

<p>The Youth Unity of Uzbekistan</p>	<p>Project partner</p>	<p>Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for further youth and peace-building activities</p>	<p>The main goal of the Unity is empowering the young people to take an active part in democratic, political and economic reforms carried out in the country, in strengthening peace and harmony in society; in contributing to the process of Uzbekistan's joining the number of developed countries of the world; in ensuring effective protection of the rights, legitimate interests and freedoms of the young generation, increasing the spiritual and professional culture of young men and women, providing support in the embodiment of their intellectual and creative potential.</p>
<p>Presidential Administration</p>	<p>The relevant office of the Presidential Administration had been regularly informed about the project development process and project implementation process</p>	<p>Insight in the role of political lead and impulse for sustainable youth and peace-building areas Recommendations</p>	<p>Some of the roles: organization of the activities of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic to consolidate and preserve the unity of the people of the Kyrgyz Republic, to develop interethnic and civil tolerance.</p>
<p>National State Registry Service</p>		<p>Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for access to their services for youth and vulnerable groups in border regions</p>	<p>The aim of the service is the implementation of the state registration policy, as well as the policy in the field of electronic digital signature. Provides a broad range of services to population from the issue of birth certificates, passports, registration of vehicles etc. One of the support function of the service is to participate in the process of delimitation and demarcation of the state border line of the Kyrgyz Republic with neighbouring states (from the Statute of the NSRS).</p>



<p>Ombudsperson' institution, Central Apparatus in Bishkek (Department of Protection of rights of children, women and families, Department of protection of the social, economic and cultural rights)</p>	<p>The office of Ombudsman and its regional offices supported the project to develop mini guide for lawyers who serve at community level, delivered consultations, etc.</p>	<p>Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for access to justice, to complaint mechanisms, and equity issues concerning youth and vulnerable groups in border regions</p>	<p>Control over execution of the constitutional human and civil rights and freedoms in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic to the extent of its jurisdiction is exercised by the Ombudsman (Akyikatchy) of the Kyrgyz Republic who is guided by the Constitution, as well as other laws of the Kyrgyz Republic, international agreements and treaties ratified by the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as universally recognized principles and standards of the international law.</p>
<p>Prosecutor's Office</p>	<p>Informed about the progress of the project, were consulted throughout the project</p>	<p>Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for access to justice and equity issues concerning youth within their jurisdiction</p>	<p>The prosecutor's office of the Kyrgyz Republic is the state body designed to provide rule of law, unity and strengthening of legality, and protection of the interests of the people, society and state protected by the law.</p>
<p>Ministry of Justice</p>	<p>Informed about the progress of the project, were consulted throughout the project</p>	<p>Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for equity issues concerning youth in border regions</p>	<p>The Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz develops and implements the state policy in the field of legal regulation, forensic expertise, advocacy, notarial and probationary activities, ensuring registration within the granted powers and developing a unified state policy in the field of archival affairs, registration of the population, etc.</p>
<p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</p>	<p>Informed about the progress of the project, were consulted throughout the project</p>	<p>Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for further cross-border youth and peace-building activities</p>	<p>Some the duties of the Ministry is to provide assistance in maintaining international peace, global and regional security based on the principles of equality and security for all; participation in the development and expansion</p>

			of foreign economic and trade relations of the Kyrgyz Republic with foreign states, promoting exports and tourism opportunities of the Kyrgyz Republic, attracting foreign investment, new technologies and innovations in the economy of the Kyrgyz Republic, expanding humanitarian and technical cooperation with foreign states and international organizations, as well as participation in the implementation of economic and social policy of the Kyrgyz Republic.
<b>Duty bearers at the local level</b>			
Municipal and district level representatives involved with youth issues.	The main partners in project implementation, recipients of the capacity building activities	Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations concerning youth participation	As above
National State Registry Service, Service Centres in Osh and provinces	Informed about the progress of the project, were consulted throughout the project	Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for access to their services and the needs of youth and vulnerable groups in border regions	
Law enforcement bodies	Capacity building, Informed about the progress of the project, were consulted throughout the project	Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations as duty bearers in border regions	
Community service centres (free consultative legal aid)	Capacity building, Informed about the progress of the project, were consulted throughout the project	Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for access to their services and the needs of youth and vulnerable groups in border regions	
Prosecutor office, territorial prosecutor offices in each rayon (district) and in Osh city	Informed about the progress of the project, were consulted throughout the project	Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for access to justice and equity issues concerning youth within their jurisdiction	

Authorized Representative of Ombudsman in each province	Informed about the progress of the project, were consulted throughout the project, capacity building	Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for access to justice, to complaint mechanisms,	
		and equity issues concerning youth and vulnerable groups within their jurisdiction	
State Agency for Youth and Sports, Provincial Departments	Recipients of the capacity building activities, Informed about the progress of the project, were consulted throughout the project	Good practices, lessons learned and recommendations for further youth and peace-building activities at local level	
<b>CSO project partners and activists</b>			
Public Association "Youth of Osh"	Capacity building training for mentors, workshops on leadership and tolerance to youth, Youth Peace online dialogue, implementation of youth initiatives	Summative evaluation of their activities within the project, learning opportunity about youth and peace-building concepts	CSOs implement different initiatives to support the peacebuilding processes in the county.
Accelerate Prosperity	Bootcamp, implementation of youth initiatives	Recommendations for further activities and participation	
"International Debate Education Association in Central Asia" (IDEA CA)	One of the project partners, delivered -Training on (1) leadership, (2) civic activism, (3) participatory research and data analysis, (4) debating, (5) development of social initiatives; Public hearings; Participation in budget hearings; Best practices meetings between initiative groups and LSG; Social make-a-thon; Mentorship		
Association of legal clinics of Kyrgyzstan	Legal support to population		
Public Fund "Tvoe pravo"	Partners of RUNOs in implementing local events and activities at municipal level		
John Galt VC			
"Women's Peace Bank" PF			

Other UPSHIFT programme stakeholders, if any	UPSHIFT methodology empowers young people to identify challenges in their communities and create entrepreneurial solutions to address them		
Other Leadership and Innovation Academy stakeholders, if any	The goal of the Leadership and Innovation Academy is to increase civic engagement, knowledge, skills and abilities to interact with representatives of government agencies and youth among young people from border regions with Uzbekistan		
Experts involved in the project (peace building, youth, legal aid, trainers, consultants; for example Design Thinking Workshops, Camps, etc.);	Various roles – providing technical assistance		
<b>Final Beneficiaries</b>			
Young people who have participated in project activities	Extensive capacity building of the young people involved in the project, developed innovative projects and initiatives	Summative evaluation of the project (transparency and accountability)	Meaningful participation of young women and men in political institutions and peace processes.
Parents, teachers, mentors, community members in the municipalities targeted by the project	Capacity building	Consolidation of perception of milestones and benefits Awareness raising about existing participation and initiative opportunities	
Community members	Participated at various project events (hearings, presentations) and capacity building initiatives		
Participating law students	Received training, delivered legal services to community members		

## ANNEX 3: Social Media Analysis

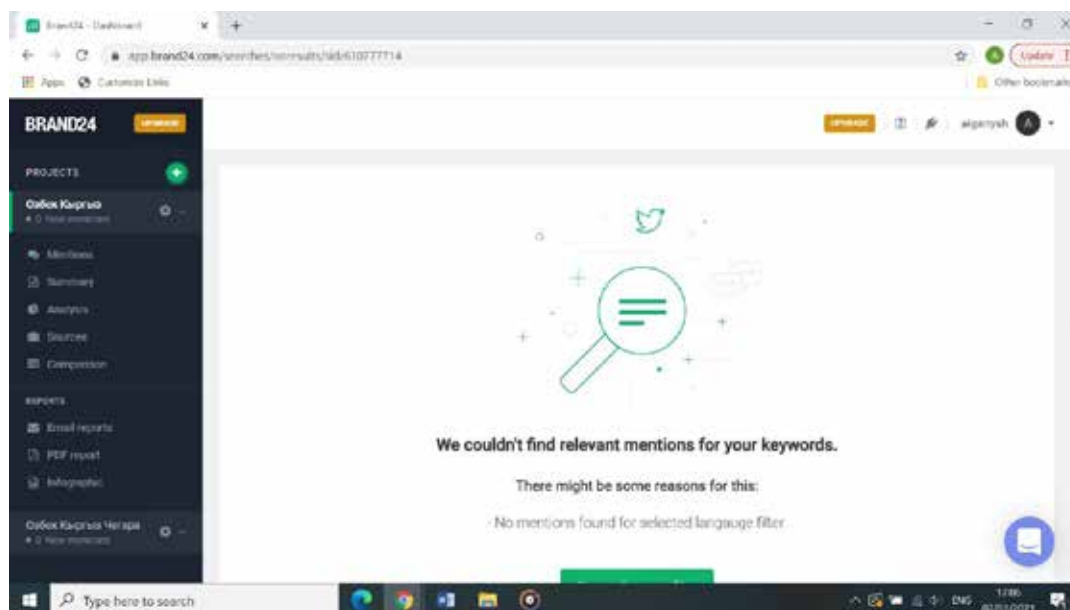
There are several factors we need to consider when interpreting social media activity by using relevant keywords. The first is uneven access to internet across locations in the three southern provinces of Osh, Batken, and Jalal-Abad. Some locations in Osh province have stable internet connection, which is a prerequisite for users to start displaying more of their views online. While some remote villages in Batken province have unreliable internet connection, which was a problem already when the project implementation had to switch to online format due to COVID-19-related restrictions on offline events. The general logic is that as long as internet remains a sporadic and thus unexplored phenomenon, its users take time to start integrating it into their regular lives and to shift more regular activities to online.

The second factor is divergent interethnic baseline in the target locations in three provinces. One collateral marker of this is that Batken did not experienced an interethnic conflict as did Osh and Jalal-Abad in 2010. Moreover, Osh city and Osh province in general have a higher percentage of ethnic Uzbek population, compared to the two other southern provinces. Studies have highlighted ways in which ethnic Uzbek population of the city of Osh (who used to constitute a majority in business and trade in Osh, while ethnic Kyrgyz population did so in state bodies) has been adjusting to post conflict landscape by moving their shops to Uzbek neighbourhoods (mahalla) from the main market.<sup>85</sup> Average population density also varies: in 2015 it was 1228.4 people per km<sup>2</sup> in Osh province, 28.2 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in Batken province, 34.6 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in Jalal-Abad province. This affects access to natural resources (land, irrigation water) and other social factors. Batken also hosts all six enclaves of the Kyrgyz Republic. Thus, to be able to track progress in interethnic relations in the project locations, we need an individual baseline measures for each village/town.

The third issue surfaced when we consulted an expert on border issues with Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan, political scientist Asel Murzakulova. Dr. Murzakulova states it is problematic for an outsider to access informative discussions on interethnic issues, since those take place in closed online communities that accept only those whom administrators know personally. Moreover, these discussions are in Uzbek or Tadjik language, and tend to activate during escalations or around spring, when irrigation starts.

The fourth factor is connected to the previous: most applications for monitoring and analysing social media activity mainly work with widely disseminated languages, thus finding posts in Kyrgyz, Uzbek, or Tadjik language is hardly possible.

This point is partly confirmed by the basic search through Facebook and Instagram using the Brand24 application:



<sup>85</sup> Ismailbekova 2020, <<https://centralasiaprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Konflikt-Na-Yuge-Kyrgyzstana-Desyat-Let-Spustya-by-Aksana-l-Philip-L.pdf>> [05/01/2020].



For the project-related online activity, there is some evidence on Instagram. During consultation with the Evaluation Reference Groups, a CSO implementing partner suggested Instagram as a social network that is widely used by young people in the Southern regions of Kyrgyzstan.



The key word to be explored in Instagram is the title of the project in Kyrgyz that was often mentioned by the participants in interviews – “Cheksiz dostuk” (borderless friendship).

There are 1,393 Instagram posts produced with the hashtag “cheksiz dostuk” in Kyrgyz (#чексиздостук). A share of posts (163) was made by the NGO “Youth of Osh” that was charged with implementing trainings for the youth in border communities. It was posting regular updates of the project activities, guest speakers, and also initiated challenges and streams. “Youth of Osh” posts were getting 400-600 views per post.

Individual project participants – youth in border communities made 173 posts from their private accounts. These were photos from the project activities with other project participants and mentors. Private posts were receiving around 30 views per post.

Several mentors were posting privately about the project activities too: there were 35 posts with the #чексиздостук (“cheksiz dostuk”) hashtag. These were getting about 50 views.

There is a number of pages of youth border communities on Instagram, such as

- jashtar\_\_padysha\_ata
- jashtar\_aravan
- jashtar\_karatokoi
- young\_aidarken
- jashtar\_karasuu
- karasuu\_jashtar\_birimdigi
- jashtar\_mamay
- aigul\_too\_jashtary\_batken

All of these communities contain the word “youth” (jashtar in Kyrgyz) and geographical attachment, such as Aidarken, Karasuu, Aravan, Padysha-Ata. Some of these pages were set up during the project and subdued their activity after the project finalisation. Most continued their online activity. Over 300 posts were posted by the border community pages about the project. The posts were receiving about 30 views per post, which indicates a rather low online visibility, mostly among own personal network.

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## ANNEX 4: Sampling

The project took place in three provinces: Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken. The target municipalities were selected through a separate evaluation and identification of pilot communities through consultations with heads and representatives of local self-government bodies, local residents, youth activists, local councils, state administrations, independent experts, donor organisations and other relevant structures at the national, provincial and regional levels. As a result, nine communities bordering with Uzbekistan were selected as target sites:

- **Osh province** (population: 1,263,400 as of 1 January 2020)<sup>86</sup>
  - **Kara-Suu**, Kara-Suu rayon, population of Kara-Suu city 27,100 people (as of 1 January 2020). Kara-Suu city's population 60.7% are ethnically Uzbek and 30.8% are ethnic Kyrgyz (according to the network of CSOs "For reforms and results").
  - **Kashkar-Kyshtak**, Kara-Suu rayon, population of 16,280 people (as of 2009).
  - **Tepe-Korgon**, Aravan rayon, population of 7,556 people (2009 census)<sup>87</sup>. Aravan rayon's population is 83.53% Uzbek (2009 census).
- **Jalal-Abad province** (population: 1,167,500 as of 1 January 2020)<sup>88</sup>
  - **Kerben** is the centre of the Aksy rayon, population of 28,300 people (as of 1 January 2017).<sup>89</sup> Ethnic composition of population is 89% Kyrgyz, 8.9% Uzbek, and other groups.<sup>90</sup>
  - **Kashka-Suu** village also belongs to the Aksy rayon.
  - **Kok-Serek** village belongs to the Ala-Buka rayon.
- **Batken province** (population: 488,900 as of 1 January 2020)<sup>91</sup> – the youngest and the most remote province of the KR.
  - **Aidarken** town, Kadamjay rayon, population of 10,331 (2009 census).
  - **Birlik** village, Kadamjay rayon.
  - **Suu-Bashy**, Leilek rayon, population of 503 individuals (as of 2009 census).

These regions have borders with the Uzbek territories and experience ongoing border related conflicts.

The main recipients and partners of the project are the State and Municipal institutions, Civil Society Organisations that have the mandate and functional tasks to work with youth in the border area.

The sample of municipalities for the evaluation was done according to the following criteria:

- All three provinces were covered; it was agreed that the fourth municipality should be from Jalal-Abad province because there are very few other projects working there;
- Representative level of coverage/service by the project and CSOs;
- Geographic spread;
- Representativeness of urban settlements (rural/urban);
- Logistical feasibility (sufficient internet connexion and digital literacy of interviewees).

The sampled municipalities were Kashkar-Kyshtak (Osh, rural), Aidarken (Batken, urban) and Kok-Serek (Jalalabad, rural) and Kerben (Jalalabad, urban).

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<sup>86</sup> National Statistics Committee: <<http://stat.kg/ru/statistics/naselenie/>> [20/10/2020].

<sup>87</sup> <<https://web.archive.org/web/20110810173811/http://212.42.101.100:8088/nacstat/sites/default/files/%D0%9E%D1%88%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F%20%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D1%8C.pdf>> [20/10/2020].

<sup>88</sup> National Statistics Committee: <<http://stat.kg/ru/statistics/naselenie/>> [20/10/2020].

<sup>89</sup> <[www.stat.kg/ru/news/chislennost-naseleniya-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki-na-1-yanvary-2017-goda/](http://www.stat.kg/ru/news/chislennost-naseleniya-kyrgyzskoj-respubliki-na-1-yanvary-2017-goda/)> [20/10/2020].

<sup>90</sup> <[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9A%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B1%D0%B5%D0%BD\\_\(%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B3%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%8F\)](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9A%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B1%D0%B5%D0%BD_(%D0%9A%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B3%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%8F))> [20/10/2020] (probably 2009 census).

<sup>91</sup> National Statistics Committee: <<http://stat.kg/ru/statistics/naselenie/>> [20/10/2020].

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## ANNEX 5: List of Interviewee categories

- Staff of the UN agencies involved in the project, and other international stakeholders (PBF, UN Regional Office); data collected by the international and national consultant. The data informed the evaluation on the theory of change of the project and its potential evolutions, the drafting and implementing of the project, the challenges and adaptations in the course of the project.
- National duty bearers: State Agency for Youth and Sports of Kyrgyzstan, national youth-related government agencies of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Presidential Administration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ombudsperson institution Central Apparatus (e.g. Department of Protection of rights of children, women and families, Department of protection of the social, economic and cultural rights), and the Prosecutor's Office. This data was collected by the national consultant with the participation of the international consultant on a need basis. The data provided insight into the political will regarding peacebuilding actions, the changes induced by the project regarding youth participation and collaboration with Uzbek counterparts, perception of capacity-building measures provided by the project, and possible medium to long-term effects of the project (ownership).
- Duty bearers in the Provinces: State Agency for Youth and Sports in KR (Provincial Departments), Authorized Representative of Ombudsman in each province, Prosecutor offices in each rayon (district) and in Osh city. Municipal-level representatives in the sampled municipalities, in particular those involved with the implementation of the action plan of cooperation between Batken, Osh and Jalalabad regions in Kyrgyzstan with respective neighbour regions in Uzbekistan. Local service providers in sampled municipalities: territorial divisions of the State Registry Service, law enforcement bodies, Community service centres (free consultative legal aid), etc. This data was collected by the national consultant. The data pertained to youth participation, inclusion of youth-led activities in local agendas, support of these initiatives by local self-government structures, perception and results of capacity building measures, and ownership at local level.
- CSO project partners and activists:
  - Public Association "Youth of Osh"
  - Accelerate Prosperity
  - "International Debate Education Association in Central Asia" (IDEA CA)
  - Association of legal clinics of Kyrgyzstan
  - Public Fund "Tvoe pravo"
  - John Galt VC
  - "Women's Peace Bank" PF
  - Other UPSHIFT programme stakeholders: implementing partners and mentors
  - Other Leadership and Innovation Academy stakeholders: implementing partners and mentors
- Rights holders on local level:
  - Participating youths in the sampled municipalities (with attention to representativeness regarding gender, age and type of activity within the project);
  - Parents, teachers, mentors, community members in the sampled municipalities;
  - Parents involved in the parenting programme.

## ANNEX 6: Inception Report

<https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/reports/promoting-kyrgyzstans-youth-cohesion-and-interaction-towards-uzbekistan-2019-2020>

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*Evaluation of UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP project*

#### Highlights

This inception report outlines the results of the inception phase of the evaluation of the project “Promoting Kyrgyzstan’s youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan” implemented by UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA (hereinafter “the project”). The purpose of this report is to secure a common understanding, within the evaluation team, and between the evaluation team and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), of the theory of change (ToC), processes and methods which will guide this evaluation towards the production of a final evaluation report. It is based on background desk research, project documents and inception interviews with the project staff and the United Nations Peace Building Support Office (PBSO). Together with the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the evaluation, the inception report will serve as a benchmark document and as a reference document. However, the evaluation activities will depend on the evolutions of both the ongoing covid-19 pandemic and the protests following the parliamentary election in Kyrgyzstan on 4 October 2020, which will have to be observed closely.

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**Author**  
UNICEF

**Publication date**  
July 2020

**Languages**  
English

## ANNEX 7: List of Project Documents

### UNFPA

#### 1. Activity reports

LIA 1 Activity report	2019
LIA 2 Activity report	2019
LIA 3 Activity report	2019
Общественные слушания - отчет	2019
LIA 4 Activity report	2020
LIA 5 Activity report	2020

#### 2. Media reports

Media report for Q 4	2019
Communication plan UNFPA	2019
Communication guideline	2019
Media report for Q 1	2020
Media report for Q 2	2020
media report online makeathon	2020
media report for PBF	2020

#### 3. Travel reports

Travel report Osh	March, 2019
Travel report Osh	April, 2019
Schedule of presentations	April, 2019
Travel report Osh	June, 2019
Agenda of meeting in Jalal-Abad	June, 2019
Agenda of meeting in Toktogul	June, 2019
Travel report Osh	July, 2019
Monitoring report	July, 2019
Travel report JA	Sep, 2019
Travel report Osh - JA	Sep, 2019
Travel report Osh	Sep, 2019
Travel report Osh	Oct, 2019
Monitoring report	Oct, 2019
Travel report Osh	Nov, 2019
Travel report Batken	Nov, 2019
Schedule of community talks	Nov, 2019
Travel report Osh	Dec, 2019
Agenda of training	Dec, 2019
Travel report	Jan, 2020
Agenda of training	Jan, 2020
Agenda of training	Jan, 2020
Agenda of trainings	Jan, 2020
Travel report Batken	Feb, 2020
Travel report JA	Feb, 2020
Travel report Osh	March, 2020



#### 4. Workplan progress report

WPR	June, 2019
WPR	Oct, 2019
WPR	Jan, 2020
WPR	April, 2020
WPR	June, 2020

#### 5. Stories (2020)

1. История Айзады Эркинбаевой
2. История Икболжона
3. История менторов
4. История МИГ
5. Статья №1\_1
6. Статья №1\_2
7. Статья №1\_3
8. Статья №1\_4
9. Карточки Чексиз Достук
10. Список историй успеха

#### 6. Workplans

Workplan	June, 2019
Workplan	July, 2019
Workplan	Aug, 2019
Workplan	Sep. 2019
Workplan	Oct. 2019
Workplan	Nov, 2019
Workplan	Dec, 2019
Workplan	Jan, 2020
Workplan	Feb, 2020
Workplan	March, 2020
Workplan	April, 2020
Workplan	May, 2020
Workplan	June, 2020
Workplan	July, 2020
Workplan	Aug, 2020
Workplan	Sep. 2020
GPS Workplan KGZ04IDE_Rev4	Jan, 2020
GPS Workplan KGZ04IDE_Rev 3	July, 2020
GPS Workplan KGZ04YPI_Rev 2	2019
GPS Workplan KGZ04YPI_Rev 2	2020

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## 7. Media plans (2019)

Медиаплан по ЮНФПА

Updated workplan.

### UNDP (and Implementing Partners)

1. Annual Working Plan (Jan.2019)
2. Annual Working Plan (Jan.2020)
3. Meeting minutes, UNDP Peace and Development Staff with the Director of the Center for Coordination of FLAC under the MoJ (March 2019)
4. Meeting minutes, discussion of the project implementation strategies (March 2019)
5. Mini-guide for community-based lawyers (2019)
6. Report, desk-research (2019)
7. Report on improving complaining mechanisms (2019)
8. Interim report on provided legal support (2019)
9. Interim report on provided legal support (Aug.2019)
10. Report on youth legal needs assessment (2019)
11. Report on content for video reels on complaint mechanisms for youth (2019)
12. Report on youth-to-youth legal aid support mechanisms (Aug.2019)
13. Report on Law school (Sept.2019)
14. Report on provided trainings for local and foreign students (Feb.2020)
15. Report on the results of the online Law school "Ukuktuk Mektep" for youth (May 2020)
16. Report on support to the development of the inclusive Roadmaps in Southern Universities (June 2020)
17. Report on results of the activities for youth (Aug.2019)
18. Visual FAQ on FAQ by youth living in border area (Nov.2019)
19. Report on conducting short-term trainings on effective gender and age sensitive criminal investigative procedures for young men and women living in border areas and for law enforcement (Nov.2019)
20. Final report on conducting short-term trainings on effective gender and age sensitive criminal investigative procedures for young men and women living in border areas and for law enforcement (Dec.2019)
21. Action plan Youth Diplomacy Week- Action Plan (June 2020)

### Back to the Office Reports:

- 01.2\_Список участников
- BoR Nargiza Jenisheva
- BoR Nargiza Tashtemirova
- BoR Subanov\_Pratova
- BTOR - Osh-Batken Jan 2020
- BTOR\_Kaldarov
- Онлайн мониторинговый отчет
- Отчет мониторинга\_Жалал-Абад

- 
- Отчет по поездке Ж-А, Ош, Баткен\_2019
  - Отчет по поездке\_25-27 фев 2020 ЖА
  - Фото\_информационные встречи\_2019

#### Implementing Partners' Reports:

- IC reports-NT
  - Desk research Report 113115\_14.03.2019
  - Interim Report on provided legal support 2019
  - Interim Report on provided legal support\_august 2019
  - mini guide for lawyers обложка
  - miniguide for lawyers UNDP
  - PoA\_IC\_Nargiza Tashtemirova
  - Report on implementation of legal aid support for youth living in border areas. 2019
  - Report on improving complaint mechanisms
  - Рег лист\_ориентационный тренинг
- IC-Sabyr Samidin u
  - Информационный бюллетень 2
  - Информационный бюллетень 3
  - Информационный бюллетень
  - Календарный план на июль\_Сабыр
  - Календарный план на май\_Сабыр
  - Календарный план на октябрь\_Сабыр
  - Календарный план на сентябрь\_Сабыр (1)
  - Календарный план работы на октябрь\_Самидин уулу Сабыр
  - Отчет об оценке потенциала
  - Предложения относительно механизма подачи жалоб
  - Проект Плана действий
- IP-Association of legal clinics
  - меморандумы с ОМСУ-и планы действий (for all 9 target locations)
  - A4\_UKUKTUK\_AYMAK
  - Report ALC\_Aug.2019
  - Report ALC\_content for video reelson complaint mechanisms 2019
  - Report ALC\_Feb.2020
  - Report ALC\_Sept.2019
  - Report ALC-January 2020
  - report ALC-needs assessment 2019
  - Report kyrg (Jashtar)
  - report on Inclusive Roadmaps in Universities\_ALC
  - Баткен список участников ФГД май 2019
  - Жалал-Абад список участников ФГД май 2019

- 
- Календарь мероприятий АЮКК-Inclusive Roadmaps
  - Описание\_проект плана мероприятий\_образовательный контент для молодежи\_ АЮКК
  - отчет Ассоциации юридических клиник Кыргызстана\_ПРООН
  - Отчет АЮКК\_июль 2019
  - отчет по итогам Укуктук мектеп онлайн АЮКК. 2020
  - отчет по результатам анкетирования школьников октябрь 2019
  - письмо с МОиН КР
  - ПЛАН МЕРОПРИЯТИЙ ИЮЛЬ (1)
  - ПЛАН МЕРОПРИЯТИЙ ПРОЕКТА ПРООН 1
  - План мероприятий\_РМ19166\_АЮКК
  - Программа выездных встреч (1)
  - Программа выездных встреч\_2019
  - Программа конференции 26 сентября
  - Регистрационные листы Ош ФГД май 2019
  - Список участников конференции на 26 сентября (1)
  - справочник на русском (1)
  - форма обратной связи с клиентом
  - Ход урока гражданство КР\_ Салыжанова Э.
  - ход урока Миграция \_ Женишева Н.
  - ход урока Права Человека\_Женишева Н.
  - Ход урока семейного права\_Салыжанова Э.
  - электр.рег лист участников
  - IP-IDEA SA
    - Проект\_Консенсус\_(ПРООН)- финал
  - IP-Infocom
    - 05062020\_Отчет по Истребованию
    - KY\_19 June Infocom-online briefing
    - LOA Infocom eng
    - LOA Infocom rus
  - IP-Kosh-Araket
    - Отчет сем, рег.лист\_Кашкар-Кыштак АО\_12 авг
    - Отчет сем, рег.лист\_Кок-Серек АО\_21авг
    - Отчет сем, рег.лист\_мэрия г.Кара-Суу\_13 авг
    - Отчет сем, рег.лист\_Тепе-Коргон АО\_14 авг
    - Отчет сем,рег.лист\_мэрия г.Кербен\_20авг
    - Отчет сем,рег.лист\_Кашка-Суу АО\_19авг
    - План действий\_Кош-Аракет
    - Рабсеминар\_Айдаркен\_24082020
    - Рабсеминар\_Бирлик АО\_25082020

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- Рабсеминар\_Суу-Башы\_26082020
  - IP-Set prigranichnoi molodezhi
    - Детальный\_план\_Айдаркен СПМ
  - IP-Tвое pravo Public Fund
    - Final report\_Tвое Pravo
    - Детальный план работы
    - Отчет о проделанной работе\_Твое право
    - План работ пособия для УЦ ГП
  - IP-Youth of Osh
    - KY\_Action-plan-UNDP-MediaLab
    - KY\_narrative\_progress\_report#1\_signed
    - KY\_narrative\_progress\_report#2\_signed
    - KY\_Youth Diplomacy Week\_action plan

#### Legal cases success stories

- Анализ сводной статистики
- Положение о ЦПУ АО\_кырг.яз.
- Приложение 3 \_Успешные истории (4 stories)

#### Media reports:

- 2018116 PBF Leaflet- Current UN Peacebuilding Fund Projects
- bayan#4\_rus
- List of links to media posts
- poster and programme ВИРТУАЛЬНЫЙ КРУГЛЫЙ СТОЛ
- project update presentation
- Лифлет КЫРГ
- Медиаплан UNDP\_113115
- photos, videos and visual material

#### National Stakeholders (correspondence)

- 07.2\_Second Letter from SRS
- 31207 Batken Department of Youth Affairs requests for support of Youth Forum in Kadamjay in August 2019
- 31208 Batken oblast requests for support of Youth Forum in Kadamjay in August 2019
- letter from GAMSUMO
- Letter\_7371\_to SRS\_26.11.2019
- письмо АПППКР\_ГАМФКС
- Письмо Молодежного комитета г.Ош
- письмо от МЮ КР 07.05.2019

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### Plans:

- AWP\_00113115\_2019
- AWP\_113115\_Youth cohesion UZB\_2020

### Resolutions – Round Tables:

- 01.1\_Отчет фасилитатора
- 01.1\_Программа\_Форум в Оше
- 01.2\_LOP
- final resolution\_Virtual round table 24.04.2020
- final resolution\_Virtual round table 24.04.2020\_ENG
- Poster & Programme ВИРТУАЛЬНЫЙ КРУГЛЫЙ СТОЛ

### RUNO meetings and minutes:

- Comms session agenda&LoP 12 July

### Storytelling:

- История Камила и Бекназар
- История Муслима и Даниил
- История\_Жанара\_Мыктыбек\_Айдаркен
- История\_Икболжон\_Рабия\_Кара-Суу

### UNICEF (and Implementing Partners)

Quarterly reports Q1 (14.11.2019), Q2 (November 2019 – February 2020) and Q3 (undated).

Report: ОТЧЕТ, Тема тренинга : Управление и бюджетирование ориентированные на результат (Dec. 2019)

Workplan July-November 2020

2019 06 30 Media report

2019\_Annual report\_final

2020 06 15 Annex C\_Media report\_UNDP

2020 06 15 Annex D\_ Media report UNFPA

2020 06 30 Annual Financial Report\_IRF\_final

181106\_GYPI\_Kyrgyzstan\_UNICEF\_ProDoc\_Gateway

Annual Financial Report\_IRF\_final

Information on UPSHIFT methodology

Kyrgyzstan\_NCE\_Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion\_113043\_GW

Online UPSHIFT report\_AP\_YoO May 2020

UNICEF Template for Call for Expression of Interest CSOs

Отчет тренинга ГАМФСК



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### Accelerate Prosperity:

Q1 Narrative Report under UNICEF “Cheksiz Dostuk” Project

Q2 Narrative Report under UNICEF “Cheksiz Dostuk” Project

Q3 Narrative Report under UNICEF “Cheksiz Dostuk” Project

Список\_команд\_Баткен\_Ж-А\_Ош (1)\_list of 56 NEW project participants

### Youth of Osh:

Q1 Narrative report and related files:

- Annex C-1 Quarterly report
- List of recruited mentors
- Locations list
- Media Clipping Report 1
- Media Clipping Report 2
- Outreach results\_KY
- Pre- Post Test Results\_KY
- Report on locations\_Aidarken
- Report on locations\_Aravan
- Report on locations\_Birlik
- Report on locations\_Kara-Suu
- Report on locations\_Kashkar-Kyshtak
- Report on locations\_Kashka-Suu
- Report on locations\_Kerben
- Report on locations\_Kok-Serek
- Report on locations\_Suu-Bashy
- Stakeholders meeting
- ToT participants list
- Отчет по проведенному воркшопу

Q2 Narrative report and related files:

- Agenda of bootcamp Osh
- Agenda Pitching all locations
- Annex C-1 Quarterly report
- final list of UPSHIFT participants\_KY

Q3 Narrative report and related files:

- Annex C-3 Quarterly report
- Narrative report on Online UPSHIFT
- online\_Pitching\_minutes\_23042020\_signed
- Social Media clipping Report (quarterly)
- БЭМС\_доп инициатива в г.Кербен

- 
- Жоодонбеков\_отчет
  - Критерии оценки инициатив
  - Отчет по онлайн UPSHIFT
  - Результаты оценки онлайн питчинга
  - ФИО новых команд и проблемы (1)

### Common files to all three RUNOs

#### Baseline datasets

- Baseline report (both English and Russian, Nov. 2019)
- 1\_Анкета количественный опрос\_РУС (1)
- обработка (2)
- correspondence regarding Данные по базовой оценке
- Финал база данных\_UNICEF\_900

#### Final site selection report with annexes

- Selected target locations\_jointly YOO & IDEA CA
  - Locations list
  - Report on locations\_Aravan
  - Report on locations\_Birlik
  - Report on locations\_Kerben
- Report Attachments\_border\_list
- Report\_questionnaire\_infographics
- Report\_UNICEF\_edited\_25.02.19 by Ulan Nogoibaev
- анкета\_UNDP\_PBF
- анкета\_UNFPA
- Население по югу в разрезе АА
- Список локаций и школ

#### Kyrgyz-Uzbek plans

- Memorandum
- Мероприятия - между приграничными областями КР и РУз на 2017-2022 гг
- План сотрудничества Баткен Фергана
- совместный план КР и РУз- joint plan of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan

#### Other PBO projects (preventing violent extremism, PVE)

- Selected 11 municipalities on PVE projects
- Correspondence regarding the mapping of communities involved in PBF projects

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### Peacebuilding Priority Plans

- UNPBF in Kyrgyzstan\_PVE PPP\_2017-2020 SIGNED
- UNPBF\_Kyrgyzstan-Priority-Plan-2013-2016-and-PBSO-approval-letter (1)
- Peace Nexus Foundation, Conflict and Peace Analysis Kyrgyzstan, April 2019

### Project documents

- Final YPI Project Document Signed (Sep 2018)
- 1\_PBF\_project\_document\_Signed Final YPI Project Document 2018 KYR
- 2\_Final M&E frame
- 3\_Baseline report\_final\_rus
- 4\_Baseline report\_eng
- 113043\_PD\_YPI\_Amendment 2020\_FINAL
- Work plan\_EN for RC

### PBF project progress report and annexes (June 2020)

- Annex A\_Youth initiatives and LSG contribution\_UNICEF
- Annex B\_Youth initiatives and LSG contribution\_UNFPA
- Annex C\_Media report\_UNDP
- Annex D\_Media report UNFPA
- Annex E\_Positive Human impact
- Annex F\_Social Media Clipping Report\_UNICEF
- Annex G\_Mass Media Clipping Report\_\_UNICEF
- Annex H\_Human impact\_parents\_UNICEF
- Annual Financial Report\_IRF\_final
- YPI report\_June 2020

### PBF project progress report and annexes (November 2019)

- Concept of LIA\_UNFPA\_24.05.2019
- Concept of parenting program\_draft
- Information on UPSHIFT methodology
- List of selected municipalities
- PBF project progress report \_ June 2019\_final 19062019

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## ANNEX 8: Information about the Evaluators

- Camille Massey, International Consultant, Team leader <camille.massey.pro@gmail.com>
  - Team management
  - Methodology
  - Data collection: UN interviews on par with National Consultant
  - Responsible for drafting and quality assurance of all deliverables
- Gulnara Asilbekova, National Consultant <gulnara.asilbekova@yahoo.com>
  - Data collection: documents, interviews (duty bearers, UN jointly with International Consultant)
  - Review, analysis, support and advice
  - Input for reports, review of Russian translation
  - Human interest story
- Aiganysh Isaeva, National Expert <aiganysh.isaeva@gmail.com>
  - Data collection:
    - social media research (collection, analysis and input for final report)
    - interviews (right holders)
  - Human interest stories