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**POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS
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EVALUATION REPORT

**UDF-17-776-GEO
Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in
Georgia**

3 November 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT.....1**

- II. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGY4**
 - (i) Development context.....4
 - (ii) The project objective and intervention rationale5
 - (iii) Project strategy and approach6

- III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY7**

- IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS8**
 - (i) Coherence8
 - (ii) Relevance9
 - (iii) Effectiveness11
 - (iv) Efficiency12
 - (v) Impact12
 - (vi) Sustainability13
 - (vii) UNDEF added value14

- V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS15**

- VI. LESSONS LEARNED16**

- ANNEXES17**
 - Annex 1: Evaluation questions17
 - Annex 2: Documents reviewed19
 - Annex 3: Schedule of interviews21
 - Annex 4: Acronyms23
 - Annex 5: Data collection questions24

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All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the author.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluator. They do not represent those of UNDEF or any of the institutions referred to in the report

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I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

(i) Background

This report is the evaluation of the project called “Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia”. The project was implemented by the Tbilisi-based Consortium Legal Aid Georgia (LAG), in partnership with the Kutaisi-based Organization Future Prosperity House (OFPH), the Zugdidi-based Legal Protection Institute (LPI), and the Tbilisi-based Social Program Foundation (SPF). Its objective was to empower Georgia’s IDP communities to fully exercise their electoral rights. The project ran from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020. It covered 30 IDP communities in Georgia’s Shida Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Imereti, and Samegrelo regions. The target population, over a half of which was female, included 1050 IDP community leaders and youth with completed primary education; 500 IDPs seeking legal counseling; 160 participants of public debates; and representatives of 10 civil society organizations (CSOs). Indirectly, the project implementation benefited approximately 13,000 persons – residing at the target IDP settlements. The project received a UNDEF grant amounting 198,000 USD, including 18,000 USD set aside by UNDEF for monitoring and evaluation.

(ii) Assessment of the project

LAG’s and the implementing partners’ multiyear expertise and experience ensured the project’s compatibility and complementarity with other interventions in the country. Representatives of the state institutions, development partners, civil society organizations and political actors confirmed that no other intervention, neither local nor international, had been or was being implemented, that could eventually have overlapped with the project. It is therefore the evaluator’s view that *the project was coherent* with LAG’s overall activities, as well as with the other actors’ interventions aimed at empowering Georgia’s IDP population.

The project team’s trifold strategy, which included increasing IDPs’ knowledge of and access to the relevant legal and practical information, enhancing CSOs’ capacity to enhance IDP participation in electoral processes, and, improving IDPs’ participation in elections as informed citizens, was well suited for the project’s stated objective in regard to the target population. The project therefore was *relevant at the local community micro level*. The extent to which *the project was relevant at the national level is however less evident* as the pre-project participation in elections among the beneficiaries was significantly higher than that of the general population (the 2016 parliamentary elections 72% vs 51.63%; the 2017 municipal elections 65.5% vs 45.65%).¹ Furthermore, the extent to which the project was relevant in promoting the right to be elected was modest.

¹ IDP participation data was available only for the project’s target population. Specific statistical information about nation-wide IDP participation in elections in Georgia does not exist.

The project delivered most of its anticipated outputs as measured through the quantitative indicators. The baseline and endline surveys on the target population's participation in the recent parliamentary and municipal elections have been conducted; the target communities received free legal consultations, trainings, and leaflets on electoral processes; they also got a chance to debate with politicians; 20 individuals have been identified and offered an opportunity to be trained as trainers for future capacity building initiatives; and, 10 CSOs received an online training on elections. Though it is commendable that the team has successfully managed to deliver the majority of the projected outputs, it was however to have been excessively focused on delivering the outputs in quantity without dedicating sufficient resources for creating preconditions for the lasting institutional impact. The Trainers' Pool, being one of the project's main post-project assets, could have been used more effectively, especially in the context of the COVID-19 related limitations and the upcoming October 2021 municipal elections. It is also uncertain to what extent the 10 capacitated CSOs were able to prove themselves as changemakers since none of them registered as an observer at the 2020 parliamentary elections. Lastly, though the LAG is currently working on redesigning its website, the insufficient web presence during the project implementation is a shortcoming in regard to the effectiveness. It is therefore the evaluator's opinion that *the project was effective in delivering the majority of the outputs, but less so in regard to creating preconditions for the lasting institutional impact.*

Overall, *the project implementation was efficient*, mostly delivered within the expected timeframe and without expenditures beyond those approved by UNDEF. The project staff's political impartiality, as perceived by the beneficiaries and public officials, especially in the context of the extreme political polarization in Georgia, contributed to the efficiency. Formal arrangements among the project's partners were adequate to the needs. Minor delays in achieving some of the project outputs did not affect the project's overall efficiency. The main issue as far as efficiency is concerned, however, resulted from the inappropriate performance by the IT Specialist and the insufficient mitigation measures employed by LAG.

In some cases, LAG exceeded the targeted outputs, which resulted in *immediate impact* having been reached beyond the expected level. Thus, the targeted 50% of participation in the 2020 parliamentary elections was exceeded by 19% and, instead of targeted 70% of the project's beneficiaries 100% registered as voters. Nonetheless, the level of the project beneficiaries' participation in the 2020 parliamentary elections was lower than the one recorded in 2016 (72% vs 69%), while the country-wide voter turnout between the elections increased from 51.63% to 56.11%. The definition of target indicators was not supported by appropriate statistics, as the baseline was established only after the project started. The evaluator therefore concludes that *the project's expected impact was achieved only in relation to the registration as voters, but less so in regards to the participation in elections.* Furthermore, though the grantee succeeded in empowering the beneficiaries as informed citizens, it however was unable to provide the projected web resources aimed at 'enhancing access to elections-related information through... LAG website/Facebook page'. Lastly, the evaluator concludes that the grantee was *unable to achieve the project's impact in regards to enhancing CSOs' capacity* to deal with electoral processes as expected in accordance with the Project Document.

LAG is well positioned for sustaining the project's results. Maintaining communication with beneficiaries and keeping the legal clinic functional contribute to the project's *sustainability*. Efforts beyond these were not sustained. Having mechanisms for future promoting IDPs participation in elections, both as electors and as candidates, and audio-visual recordings of the project's training sessions available would have been beneficial for the sustainability. Moreover, although LAG has been including the component of developing the Trainers' Pool in its post-project proposals, it has so far not been able to secure financial support for keeping it operational. Insufficient involvement of the capacitated CSOs adds to limiting sustainability.

The UNDEF's support added value to the project's being perceived impartial and increasing the grantee's visibility.

(iii) Conclusions

The fact that the project was delivered within the expected timeframe, without additional expenditures, and with respect to the sanitary norms in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is highly commendable. The project was *coherent* with LAG's overall activities, as well as with the other actors' interventions. It was *relevant* to the needs of the target communities at the micro level. Keeping the communication channels between the project beneficiaries and LAG active proves that some of the project results are being *sustained* and its *positive impact on the beneficiaries is continuing*. The shortcoming however is the lack of output indicators and data on the project's value added in relation to the right to be elected. This dimension is *of high relevance* in light of the project's objective as defined in the Project Document.

The Trainers' Pool and capacitated CSOs have the potential of becoming significant assets with a meaningful long-term value. However, the overall approach towards these important assets lacked programmatic elements. After the trainings held within the project's framework, these resources remained unclaimed. Although the project delivered most of its anticipated outputs as measured through the quantitative indicators, the lack of lasting institutional impact hinders the project's *overall impact and sustainability*. Furthermore, despite the fact that the project staff's performance was mostly efficient, LAG and the Implementing Partners proved unable to benefit from the potential offered by the use of the web-based platforms. Though LAG has a corporate website and a Facebook page, the partners have their own Facebook pages, and although the position of an IT Specialist was included in the Project Document, the project's web presence was rather insufficient.

(iv) Recommendations

It is important to look at any project as an instrument allowing to add a piece to the larger mosaic rather than a self-sufficient craft by itself. For a project to be sustainable and the impact to reach beyond the project's immediate lifetime, along with the short-term objective of ensuring the delivery of the expected outputs, it requires a *clearly defined medium- to long-term strategic vision of ensuring the impact's viability and multiplication*. It also needs to be crafted in a way that allows a complex, multilayered project design to develop into a program rather than a multitude of events. In line with these observations, *the evaluator recommends*

that UNDEF prioritize elections-related projects aimed at promoting both - the right to vote and the right to be elected, and those expanding beyond a particular electoral cycle.

It is more likely that the meaningful change will be achieved and the results sustained when the problem is approached in a balanced way from various angles. For this to happen, it is important to dedicate the proportional amount of human and financial resources to each component of the project with the clear vision of the needs during, as well as after the specific project's completion. Such approach would contribute to the project's value added to be achieved in quantity in the short-term perspective, and, increased in quality in the longer-term perspective, which would ultimately ensure the lasting institutional impact benefit the target population and beyond. *The evaluator recommends to UNDEF* to emphasize vis-à-vis applicants not only the importance of delivering the immediate outputs, but also dedicating resources for the institutional impact to replicate after the specific project has come to an end.

II. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGY

(i) Development context

In 1991 Georgia declared its independence from the Soviet Union. The early years of Georgia's reinstated statehood were marked by internal and external challenges. Civil war, loss of territories, and subsequent long-term displacement of over 300,000 persons or about 6% of Georgia's population², poverty, and widespread corruption were the main issues the young Georgian democracy had to deal with.

During the last three decades, four different political forces were mandated to govern the country. All four had different approaches towards issues faced by Georgia's IDPs. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the leader of the Round Table – Free Georgia alliance served as the country's first president. After less than a year in office, he was exiled and replaced by Eduard Shevardnadze. It is during the rule of Gamsakhurdia and Shevardnadze that due to the Georgian side's nationalistic rhetoric and political and military miscalculations, as well as Russia's intervention, the first waves of the internal displacement struck the newly independent state as a result of ethnic conflicts in and the loss of control over Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia, two of the three autonomous entities within Georgia.

During the two-term presidency of Shevardnadze, Georgia made its first steps towards democratic consolidation suffering meanwhile from corruption, mismanagement, and poverty. Those were the main causes of the 2003 Rose Revolution when after widespread protests over the disputed parliamentary elections he was dismissed and replaced by Mikheil Saakashvili and his United National Movement.

² UNHCR, *Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia: A Gap Analysis, July 2009*, p. 6

Saakashvili's vision allowed for the reformation of public services and security to be implemented, economy to grow, and corruption to drop. However, he was criticized for authoritarian tendencies, disproportionate use of law enforcement, the lack of the democratic control and dysfunctional judiciary. In August 2008, after a failed attempt to regain control over Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and the subsequent five-day war between Russia and Georgia, while many problems of the majority of those displaced in the 1990s still remained unresolved, another wave of internal displacement struck the country resulting in approximately 30,000 additional persons to face long-term displacement³. After the war, a few countries including Russia recognized the two Georgian regions as independent states.

In 2012, the Georgian Dream coalition led by Bidzina Ivanishvili defeated Saakashvili's party in the parliamentary elections. This was the first time that power transferred constitutionally between rival political forces in Georgia. Since then, the Georgian Dream coalition adopted the policy of peaceful reintegration of Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Since 2008, the UN General Assembly has been adopting consecutive resolutions⁴, that recognize the right of return of all internally displaced persons and refugees and their descendants, regardless of ethnicity, to their homes throughout Georgia, including in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. As of 2020, the number of registered IDPs in Georgia was 286,811⁵. The majority of them live in the region bordering Abkhazia and in the Georgian capital Tbilisi, face challenging conditions and are seeking a durable housing solution to be offered⁶. For years, the lack of attention towards their problems and the resulting decades-long uncertainty, broken promises and victimization were considered as the main reasons for Georgian IDPs to develop apathy towards meaningful participation in the country's political life.

(ii) The project objective and intervention rationale

With an operational budget of 180,000 USD, the overall objective of the "Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia" project was to empower Georgia's IDP communities to fully exercise their electoral rights. The strategy employed by the grantee was informed by the assumption that the level of IDPs' participation in elections is low and that they represent an easy target for manipulation by political actors. Though the pre-project participation in elections among the project beneficiaries was significantly higher than that of the general population, LAG could not have been aware of this in advance due to the lack of appropriate statistics as the data became available as a result of the baseline survey conducted within the project's framework. However, the passive consideration of the deviation of the team's assumptions from the actual baseline and the lack

³ *Ibid*, p. 7

⁴ UN General Assembly resolution A/74/L.89 "Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, 27 August 2020

⁵ Official Website of the Internally Displaced Persons, Ecomigrants, and Livelihood Agency - <https://idp.gov.ge/en/idps-issues/>

⁶ Information obtained by the Evaluator during interview with a representative of a state institution.

of subsequent review of the implementation strategy affected the project’s relevance and overall impact.

In delivering the project’s activities, the team employed the trifold strategy, which included increasing IDPs’ knowledge of and access to the relevant legal and practical information, enhancing IDP CSOs’ capacity to deal with electoral processes, and, enhancing IDPs’ participation in elections as informed citizens.

The project’s target audience included a general IDP population (1050 IDP community leaders and youth with completed primary education and 500 IDPs seeking legal counseling), as well as IDPs with changemaking potential (160 participants of public debates with politicians and 20 representatives of CSOs).

LAG partnered with LPI, OFPH, and SPF to implement the project activities in 30 IDP communities in Georgia’s Shida Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Imereti, and Samegrelo regions. LAG was founded as a spin-off from Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in Georgia by NRC former senior staff and its 4 local implementing partners in 2013. Since then, LAG has partnered with various international donor organizations, including UNHCR, Danish Refugee Council, US Embassy Tbilisi, Save the Children, ODIHR, etc., to implement a number of projects aimed at providing legal aid for IDP communities, building capacity, and mobilizing the community.

(iii) Project strategy and approach

The logical framework below aims to present the project’s activities, intended outcomes, impact, and objectives that the project team was aiming at achieving through the project.

Project Activities	Intended outcomes	Medium-Term Impacts	Long-Term Development Objectives
Increasing IDPs’ knowledge of and access to the relevant legal and practical information			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting baseline and endline surveys on the target group’s participation in the parliamentary and local elections; • Training the target IDP communities on electoral processes; • Training and creating a pool of trainers for future capacity building initiatives; 	<p>70% of targeted IDPs report an increase in their knowledge of electoral processes and consider participation in elections as their civic duty. They also report having enhanced access to election-related information through the project publications and LAG</p>	<p>IDPs better informed about their rights as voters and candidates.</p> <p>A pool of trainers competent to support IDPs and to operate as focal point for election related questions.</p>	<p>Georgia’s IDP communities empowered to fully exercise their electoral rights.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing and publishing 4 leaflets on electoral processes; and • Holding public debates on elections with the participation of IDPs and politicians. 	website / Facebook page.	Politicians better informed about issues faced by IDPs.	
Enhancing CSOs' capacity to support IDPs' participation in electoral processes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting and training 10 IDP CSOs to support IDP participation; and • Having 5 IDP CSOs registered as electoral observers. 	8 IDP CSOs supported IDPs in their region to participate in electoral processes, and 5 CSOs registered for election monitoring.	IDP CSOs capacity to act as changemakers enhanced.	Georgia's IDP communities empowered to fully exercise their electoral rights.
Improving IDPs' participation in upcoming parliamentary and municipal elections			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing legal counseling on elections related matters; and • Checking and verifying project's beneficiaries' personal information in the voters' lists 	70% (350) of the legal clinic beneficiaries (500) are registered as voters, and 845 out of 1690 (50%) voted in the elections during the project's lifetime.	Level of IDPs participation in elections as voters increased.	Georgia's IDP communities empowered to fully exercise their electoral rights.

III. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was conducted by Levon Isakhanyan, independent expert in human rights and democratization, under the terms of the contract between the United Nations and the evaluator. The evaluation took place from July to August 2021 with field work in Georgia conducted from 2 - 6 August 2021. While some of the project's target indicators referred to the municipal elections to be held in October 2021, the data collected by the evaluator and the conclusions thereof reflect the progress achieved by the time the evaluation took place.

The UNDEF evaluations are qualitative in nature and follow a standard set of questions elaborated by the OECD Development Assistance Committee Network on Development Evaluation that focus on the project's coherence, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability, as well as the additional criterion of UNDEF value added (Annex 1). This report follows that structure. Within the evaluation's framework, the evaluator reviewed available project documentation and contextual / background materials on elections and the rights of IDPs in Georgia (Annex 2).

During the field mission in Georgia, the evaluator interviewed 10 representatives of the project team, including the Chairpersons and the staff from LAG and the implementing partners - LPI, OFPH, and SPF. Other meetings focused on interviews and exchanges with 2 representatives of the donor community, civil society, 5 public sector stakeholders, and 12 project beneficiaries comprising of trainers, public debates participants, and CSOs representatives. These interviews and group meetings were carried out in Tbilisi and Gori. Because of the COVID-19 related epidemiological situation, some meetings were held online. The list of persons interviewed is provided in Annex 3.

During the preparatory work, the evaluator identified several questions which were followed up during his interviews. These included:

- Was the project compatible with other initiatives of LAG on the one hand, and interventions implemented in Georgia by other actors on the other?
- Was the project in line with the needs of the Georgian consolidating democracy?
- Has the project’s objective to empower Georgia’s IDPs to fully exercise their electoral rights been reached and how this has been measured?
- Were the human and financial resources adequate?
- Has the project caused changes, positive or negative, on democratization in Georgia?
- Can the project results be sustained beyond its completion and contribute towards further democratic consolidation in Georgia in the medium to long-term perspective?
- What was UNDEF’s value added in promoting the full realization of Georgia’s IDPs’ political rights?

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) Coherence

The project, as elaborated and implemented, was coherent with other interventions aimed at empowering Georgia’s IDP population. The project beneficiaries, state institutions’ representatives, development partners, civil society organizations, and political actors confirmed that no other intervention, neither local nor international, had been or was being implemented, which could eventually have overlapped with the project. The fact that before the implementation, LAG held information sessions with local CSOs and public officials to receive their feedback has contributed to the project’s coherence. Another factor that helped in

“Since 2007, I have been working with the IDPs and have never heard of similar activities being implemented for and by IDPs. I am convinced that such projects contribute to the advancement of our rights as citizens.”

A project beneficiary from Imereti

ensuring the project’s compatibility and complementarity with other interventions was UNDEF’s proactive role in seeking the governmental and non-governmental stakeholders’ advice on the project’s feasibility.

(ii) Relevance



Tserovani IDP Settlement built after the August 2008 war

The project team’s trifold strategy, which included increasing IDPs’ knowledge of and access to the relevant legal and practical information, enhancing CSOs’ capacity to enhance IDP participation in electoral processes, and improving IDPs’ participation in elections as informed citizens was well suited for the project’s stated objective to empower Georgia’s IDP communities to fully exercise their electoral rights. The project therefore was relevant at the beneficiary and local community micro levels inasmuch as it regards

promoting the beneficiaries as informed voters and the selection of the target communities. Stakeholders interviewed confirmed the relevance of the implemented activities in the selected regions - Shida Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Imereti, and Samegrelo, highlighting such factors as Georgia’s IDP population’s geographic dispersion, the inclusion of the municipalities established specifically for IDPs, and the location next to the “border” with the conflict zones. In an interview with the evaluator, LAG’s representative confirmed that the target communities were selected with the consideration of their geographic location and the number of residents. One representative of the public administration however mentioned that having the capital Tbilisi included would have been beneficial for the project due to the fact that over a third of Georgia’s IDP population lives there. Another representative of a state institution raised the specific issues faced by the Georgian IDPs registered in the Gali district, who are unable to cross the Enguri river to reach the side under the Georgian control to cast their vote on the election’s day.

The extent to which the project was relevant at the national level is however ambiguous as the pre-project participation in elections among the beneficiaries was significantly higher than that of the general population (the 2016 parliamentary elections 72% vs 51.63%; the 2017 municipal elections 65.5% vs 45.65%).⁷ As one of the project’s expected outcomes was to improve IDPs’ participation in elections as informed citizens, which was based on the grantee’s assumption that the level of participation was low and that the IDP population represented an easy target for manipulation by political actors, the evaluator researched factors that could possibly have affected the beneficiaries’ self-identification as informed citizens rather than the mere fact of voting. In line with Output 3.2 as defined in the Project Document (voter lists of IDPs checked

⁷ IDP participation data was available only for the project’s target population. Specific statistical information about nation-wide IDP participation in elections in Georgia does not exist.

and completed), the evaluator focused on the voter lists accuracy. In Georgia, the Central Election Commission is the body responsible for the accuracy of the voter list. The Commission collaborates with other state institutions, including the Agency on Internally Displaced Persons, Eco-Migrants and Livelihood to ensure the list's accuracy. IDPs are included in the list and are eligible to vote according to their de-facto residence. There are different offline and online options available to check the accuracy of the personal information. Within the project's framework, relevant trainings and legal consultations were provided for the beneficiaries and CSOs, including on topics related to the verification of personal information in the voter list. A group of beneficiaries interviewed confirmed that before the trainings they were unaware of the ways to check their information; after the project, they felt empowered and used the acquired knowledge. A representative of the local administration in one of the project's locations confirmed that if in the past the beneficiaries were mostly indifferent as the list's accuracy is concerned, after the project, they became proactive and are supporting the administration with the local lists' verification efforts. With this in mind, it is incomprehensible why the level of participation in parliamentary elections among the project's beneficiaries decreased following the project's initiative, since according to the baseline survey, the pre-project participation was 72%, and the data provided at the endline survey shows 69% participation. The evaluator concludes that the passive consideration of the deviation of the team's assumptions from the actual baseline and the lack of subsequent review of the implementation strategy affected the project's relevance and overall impact.



Administrative Map of Georgia
Source: Nations Online Project

The evaluator also enquired about factors that could have been related to IDPs' manipulation by the political actors as claimed by the grantee. Stakeholders interviewed confirmed that while all the political forces are keen to manipulate every segment of the Georgian society, IDPs might seem to be especially vulnerable due to their socio-economic conditions, the lack of durable housing, and the compact settlement in certain locations. Two stakeholders however disagreed with the grantee's assumption as in their opinion, IDPs are not easily manipulated as compared to the rest of the Georgian society. They mobilize around specific issues and, yes, IDPs are sensitive to certain promises, but the same could be said about the other segments of the Georgian society, albeit on issues different from those IDPs are facing.

"Direct contacts with politicians are very important. We had some issues in our settlement and the then mayoral candidate was participating in the debates. When he got elected, he solved the problem."

Public debates participant from Khoni

Another dimension researched by the evaluator was the extent to which the project was relevant in promoting the right to be elected. In this regard, the public debates with politicians and the established connections could have been used as a tool to promote the

target communities' active representatives as candidates in future elections. This is especially relevant in those locations where IDPs represent a significant part of the electorate or, in some cases, even the local majority. For the time being, this asset was mostly unclaimed. During the evaluation mission, only one beneficiary confirmed that he was planning to participate in the October 2021 municipal elections as a candidate and that the political party's approval of his nomination was pending.

(iii) Effectiveness

The project delivered most of its anticipated outputs as measured through the quantitative indicators. The baseline and endline surveys on the target population's participation in the parliamentary and municipal elections have been conducted; the target communities received free legal consultations, trainings, and leaflets on electoral processes; they also got a chance to debate with politicians; 20 individuals have been identified and offered an opportunity to be trained as trainers for future capacity building initiatives; and, 10 CSOs participated in online training on elections.



The Evaluator meets the project staff

The grantee had to adjust some of the project activities to comply with the COVID-19 related requirements. The number of one-day trainings for representatives of 30 IDP settlements was increased and the participants of each training decreased accordingly, and the format of the networking event with the participation of the IDP CSOs and the experienced national CSO was changed to online.

Though the project was effective in delivering the majority of the outputs in the challenging times of the pandemic, its effectiveness in creating preconditions for the lasting institutional impact is less evident. In coming to this conclusion, the evaluator considered opinions shared by stakeholders, as well as personal observations. In line with Output 1.3 as defined in the Project Document (to learn and grow professionally as future trainer-facilitators), the Trainers' Pool, being one of the two main post-project assets, could have been used more effectively, especially in the context of the new opportunities created due to the COVID-19 related limitations and the upcoming October 2021 municipal elections. Moreover, it is uncertain to what extent the 10 capacitated CSOs were able to prove themselves as changemakers since none of them registered as an observer at the 2020 parliamentary elections. While it is possible that individual representatives of these organizations might have received the observer's mandate, no evidence thereof was made available. The grantee could have followed up with both the trainers and the CSOs to encourage them to use and further develop the knowledge and skills received as a result of their participation in the project to build up on those assets in a more consistent way. Lastly, though the LAG is currently working on redesigning its website into a responsive, multifunctional engine, the insufficient web presence during the project implementation is a shortcoming in regard to effectiveness.

(iv) Efficiency

Overall, the project implementation was efficient, mostly delivered within the expected timeframe and without expenditures beyond those approved by UNDEF. Stakeholders interviewed confirmed that the project staff's political impartiality, as perceived by the beneficiaries and public officials, especially in the context of the extreme political polarization in Georgia, contributed to the efficiency. Formal arrangements among the project's partners were



Trainers, CSOs, Debates Participants

adequate to the needs. As the project was implemented in partnership with 3 CSOs⁸, separate sub-grant agreements were concluded specifying the sub-grant amount, the rights and responsibilities of the parties, and the reporting and monitoring modalities. Each of the implementing partners was responsible for a specific geographic area. This tactic proved efficient as the partner organizations were known and trusted in their respective regions.

According to LAG's representatives, the limitations on the movements within the country, the hesitancy to participate in indoor gatherings, and the need for personal protective equipment and hygienic tools in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic represented the main challenge in ensuring the project's efficiency. Stakeholders confirmed that the grantee was able to efficiently overcome these challenges and that no COVID-19 infection has been recorded in connection to the participation in an event within the project's framework.

Minor delays in achieving some of the project outputs did not affect the project's overall efficiency. The main issue as the efficiency is concerned however resulted from the inappropriate performance by the IT Specialist (the project's web presence was insufficient) and the lack of mitigation measures employed by LAG in this respect. Since the IT Specialist was hired on an ad-hoc basis, the evaluator was unable to interview him.

(v) Impact

In some cases, LAG exceeded the targeted outputs, which resulted in immediate impact having been reached beyond the expected level. Thus, instead of the planned 500 legal consultations 554 were provided. Along with the trainings, publications, and voters' lists verifications, this allowed exceeding the targeted 50% of participation in the 2020 parliamentary elections by 19%⁹ and to reach the record 100% registration as voters instead of the targeted 70%. With this in mind, it is unclear why 31% of the beneficiaries, who had

⁸ The project's three implementing partners are also among the members that constitute the Consortium LAG (Legal Aid Georgia).

⁹ Voter turnout throughout the country was 56.11%.

registered as voters, did not participate in the 2020 parliamentary elections. It remains also unclear what value the capacitated CSOs added to support IDPs to participate in the elections. As stated by the grantee in the Final Narrative Report in relation to the Target 2.1, 100 % of the CSOs supported IDPs to participate in the electoral processes and assisted IDPs with the voting process. Considering that the pre-project participation in elections among the beneficiaries was higher than the one recorded after the project, as well as the fact that the country-wide voter turnout between the elections increased from 51.63% to 56.11%, the evaluator concludes that the project’s expected impact on enhancing IDPs’ participation in elections as informed citizens was achieved only in relation to raising the target population’s awareness and their registration as voters, but less so in regards to the participation in the elections.

In studying the extent to which the expected impact on increasing IDPs’ knowledge of and access to the relevant legal and practical information was achieved, the evaluator came to the conclusion that the grantee succeeded in empowering the beneficiaries as informed citizens. The trainings and four leaflets published within the project’s framework proved to be instrumental in this regard. LAG however was unable to provide the projected web resources aimed at “enhancing access to elections’ related information through the project publications and LAG website/Facebook page”. It is therefore the evaluator’s opinion that the team has partially succeeded in increasing IDPs’ access to the relevant information as defined in the Project Document.

According to the Project Document, enhancing CSOs’ capacity to support IDPs’ participation in electoral processes was projected as one of the main long-term benefits of the project. The outcome’s success indicators were the number of CSOs supporting IDPs in their communities and the number of CSOs registering as electoral observers. Despite the grantee’s statement in the Final Narrative Report that both indicators have been achieved, the evaluator was unable to establish any proof of the CSOs’ registration as electoral observers in the 2020 parliamentary elections. The evaluator therefore concludes that the grantee was unable to achieve the project’s impact in regard to enhancing CSOs’ capacity to support IDPs’ participation in electoral processes as expected in accordance with the Project Document.

(vi) Sustainability

Stakeholders interviewed recognize LAG as an established, impartial actor with multiyear experience in the field. It has an extensive, countrywide network of partners. For years, LAG has been a member of various state commissions on IDPs. The organization therefore is well positioned for sustaining the project’s results, which could translate into maintaining connections with the beneficiaries aimed to further empowering them as participants of the electoral processes and building up on the institutional assets developed throughout the project. In an interview with the evaluator, LAG confirmed that it disposes of an extensive

“We do our best to make sure IDPs have access to sustainable legal support free of charge.”

SPF representative

database, which allows for maintaining communication with the project's beneficiaries, who, on their turn, are proactive in reaching out when needed.

The legal clinic's continuing functionality is another significant factor as sustainability is concerned. Representatives of LAG and the partner organizations informed the evaluator that because of their contact information had been included in the leaflets, the target communities continue to reach out with specific legal and non-legal questions. Despite that no specific legal clinic-oriented project is being implemented after the UNDEF project has come to an end, the organizations nonetheless do not turn the petitioners back and try to accommodate their needs, considering that costs associated with the legal consultations elsewhere might be unaffordable for them.

Efforts beyond those mentioned above were not sustained. Having mechanisms for future promoting IDPs' participation in elections, both as electors and as candidates, and audio-visual recordings of the project's training sessions available would have been beneficial for the sustainability. Moreover, although LAG has been including the component of developing the Trainers' Pool in its post-project proposals, it has so far not been able to secure financial support for keeping it operational. Insufficient involvement of the capacitated CSOs adds to limiting sustainability.

(vii) UNDEF added value

According to the grantee, UNDEF's support added value to the project's being perceived as impartial and increasing the grantee's visibility. It has also created a "comfortable environment" for the implementation as little effort was needed to convince stakeholders to partake in the project. As the project beneficiaries mentioned, "When we learned that the trainings were going to be offered within the UN-supported project's framework, we had no doubt about the quality. When UN is involved, the experience is always genuine."

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion	Recommendation
The project's implementation in a decentralized, impartial way proved instrumental in ensuring its efficiency.	Further develop relations between implementing agency and implementing partners, in order to dedicate consistent resources to follow-up with the capacitated CSOs.
The team was excessively focused on delivering the outputs as measured through the quantitative indicators without dedicating sufficient resources for creating effective preconditions for the lasting institutional impact.	Make sure that the proportional amount of human and financial resources is dedicated to each component of the project with the clear vision of the needs during, as well as after the specific project's completion.
Though the strategy employed by the grantee was well suited for the project's stated objective, the project proved relevant at the micro level only. Its relevance at the national level was less evident.	When elaborating future projects, make sure that assumptions' deviation from the baseline are taken into consideration and the implementation strategy is reviewed accordingly.
The reasons of the decrease of the project beneficiaries' participation in elections after the intervention are incomprehensible, especially taking into account the increase in the country-wide voter turnout during the same period of time.	When designing future/follow-up projects, make sure to identify the specific reasons why some, if any, of a previous project's expected results were missed. Consider consulting as many sources of information as possible to correctly assess all aspects of the problem to be addressed
Only one dimension of the electoral rights - the right to vote, was tackled during the project implementation. The right to be elected was left beyond the radar.	Take a holistic approach, when tackling a specific problem, in order to consider all its components.
The team's presumptions related to the target population, such as the low level of participation in elections and the vulnerability to the manipulation by Georgian politicians were not confirmed.	In elaborating future project proposals, consider consulting as many sources of information as possible to correctly assess all aspects of the problem to be addressed.
The grantee is well positioned to ensure the project's sustainability as the wide range of stakeholders recognize LAG as an established, impartial actor with the multiyear experience in the field and the countrywide network of partners. The continuous operability of the legal clinic represents one of the main channels of	Make sure that connections with the beneficiaries are maintained to further empower them as participants of the electoral processes, both as electorate and candidates, and build up on the institutional assets developed throughout the project. Make sure that the legal clinic is functional in the long-term perspective and

communication between LAG and the beneficiaries.	that sufficient resources are mobilized for its sustainability.
The project team proved unable to benefit from the web-based ecosystem during the project implementation phase due to the insufficient web presence and the lack of recorded audio-visual materials.	Make sure that LAG's new corporate website becomes available as a responsive, multifunctional engine for future municipal and national elections.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

Along with the multiyear experience and expertise in the field, the two main preconditions for the successful accomplishment of the project were the team's political impartiality and decentralization of efforts. **In transitioning societies, where democratic institutions are not yet fully mature and division between public administration and the ruling force is still not clear, being politically unaffiliated is crucially important for a project team to ensure the project's success, especially when it regards projects promoting participation in elections.**

Elections-related projects aimed at contributing to the democratic consolidation, cannot be seen as self-sufficient, stand-alone initiatives. In the current case, not considering the deviation of the team's assumptions from the actual baseline and the lack of subsequent review of the implementation strategy negatively affected the project's relevance and overall impact. When drafting and implementing such projects, **it is therefore important to consider the wide range of factors related not only to the micro dimension but also those related to the macro dimension, which are relevant for the project's integration and relevance within the larger policy context and important for the sustainability and impact to reach beyond the project's immediate lifetime.**

This project, as designed and presented had the potential to develop into a forward-looking program with a far-reaching positive impact on increasing the target population's participation in elections as voters and as candidates. Though most of the expected outputs were successfully delivered, their impact was rather limited. LAG put efforts into producing the outputs in quantity, but due to the lack of programmatic approach and appropriate follow-up missed an opportunity to ensure their long-term applicability. In some cases, especially as regards the two main assets developed within the project's framework – the Trainers' Pool and the capacitated CSOs, this resulted in insufficient performance. **Applying the mechanisms and capacity developed within the project's framework during the 2021 municipal and subsequent elections would be instrumental in increasing the sustainability of the project's results and its longer-term impact.**

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Example evaluation questions and detailed findings:

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Coherence	How well did the project “fit”; i.e. to what extent was the project compatible with other projects and programmes in the country, sector or institution?	<p><i>Internal coherence:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are there synergies and interlinkages between the project and other initiatives carried out by the Implementing Agency? <p><i>External coherence:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is there consistency with other actors’ initiatives in the same context? To what extent is there complementarity, harmonization and coordination between the Implementing Agency/the project and other organizations/projects working in the same context and on the same issue? To what extent is the project adding value while avoiding the duplication of efforts?
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have the project’s objectives been reached? To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not? Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives? What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?

Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs? ▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability? ▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address? ▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative? ▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization? ▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? ▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?
UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc). ▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed:

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Project Document*, August 2018

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Milestone Verification Reports*, 20 August 2019 and 26 June 2020

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Mid-Term Narrative Report*, 20 January 2020

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Milestone and Final Financial Utilization Reports*, 8 October 2019 and 29 April 2021

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Final Narrative Report and Annexes 1-16*, 1 February 2021

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Leaflet on Elections Systems*

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Leaflet on Elections and Types of Elections*

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Leaflet on the Changes in Georgia's Electoral Legislation*

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Leaflet on the Constitutional Changes related to Parliamentary Elections*

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, Electoral Training Module on the Legal Issues of Parliamentary and Local Self-Government Elections*

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, PowerPoint Presentation on the Legal Issues of Parliamentary and Local Self-Government Elections*

UNDEF UDF-17-776-GEO, *Fostering Democracy through Electoral Participation of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, 10 articles in the local online media www.firstnews.ge*

The Central Election Commission of Georgia, 31 October 2020 *Parliamentary Elections Voter Turnout Statistics* - <https://cesko.ge/res/docs/2020110718080120.00.1.pdf>, accessed on 12 August 2021

The Central Election Commission of Georgia, *2017 Municipal Elections Voter Turnout Statistics* - <https://cesko.ge/res/docs/aqtivoba20.002017enggender.pdf>, accessed on 12 August 2021

The Central Election Commission of Georgia, *2016 Parliamentary Elections Voter Turnout Statistics* - <https://cesko.ge/res/docs/monaciletaaqtivobaing.pdf>, accessed on 12 August 2021

The Central Election Commission of Georgia, *31 October 2020 Parliamentary Elections Registered Local Observer Organizations List* - <https://cesko.ge/res/docs/local.pdf>, accessed on 12 August 2021

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, *31 October 2020 Parliamentary Elections ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Final Report* - <https://cesko.ge/res/docs/480500.pdf>, accessed on 25 August 2021

The Central Election Commission of Georgia, *31 October 2020 Parliamentary Elections Report* - <https://cesko.ge/res/docs/annualparliament-2021eng.pdf>, accessed on 25 August 2021

Conciliation Resources, *Displacement in Georgia: IDP attitudes to conflict, return and justice, February 2011* - https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_556.pdf, accessed on 25 August 2021

UNHCR, *Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia: A Gap Analysis, July 2009* - <https://www.unhcr.org/4ad827f59.pdf>, accessed on 25 August 2021

UN General Assembly resolution A/74/L.89 “*Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, 27 August 2020* - https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/74/L.89, accessed on 25 August 2021

Official Website of the Internally Displaced Persons, Ecomigrants, and Livelihood Agency - <https://idp.gov.ge/en/idps-issues/>

Election Code of Georgia, 27 December 2011 - <https://cesko.ge/eng/static/1638/saarchevno-kodeqsi>, accessed on 25 August 2021

Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

2 August 2021, AM-PM	
Giorgi Shavgulidze	LAG Chairperson, UNDEF Project's Policy and Advocacy Consultant
Irakli Avaliani	LPI Chairperson
Mate Chapichadze	OFPH Consultant Lawyer
Ala Kedia	LPI Zugdidi Office
Lana Gogia	LPI Zugdidi Office
Irakli Tsulaia	SPF Consultant Lawyer
Lasha Khonelidze	LAG Project Manager, UNDEF Project Program Manager
Besiki Chorgolashvili	LAG Financial Manager
Ekaterine Kikatunidze, Online	OFPH Chairperson
Irakli Bokuchava, Online	SPF Chairperson
2 August 2021, PM	
Lela Todua	Trainer, Zugdidi
Izo Kvaratskhelia	Trainee, Zugdidi
Bachana Basilaia	CSO Observer, Khoni
Rusudan Jejeia	CSO Observer, Kutaisi
Irakli Pipia	CSO Observer, Shashvebi
Zviad Gegidze	Project Beneficiary, Borjomi
Goga Nachkebia	Public Debates Participant, Khoni
Zaza Kalandia	CSO Observer, Khoni
3 August 2021, AM-PM	
Travel from Tbilisi to Gori	
Mzia Metreveli	Mayor Representative Verkhvebi Settlement
Khatuna Ghviniashvili	Training Participant
Ia Parekhelashvili	Training Participant
Manana Khetereli	Training Participant
Keti Tchulukhadze	Training Participant
Mariam Chubabria, Online	Project Officer, The International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED)
Travel from Gori to Tserovani	
Travel from Tserovani to Tbilisi	
4 August 2021, AM	
Vincent Dontot, Online	Regional Director, Danish Refugee Council South Caucasus
David Peikrishvili, Online	Head of the Analytical Department, Internally Displaced Persons, Ecomigrants, and Livelihood Agency

4 August 2021, PM	
Manuchar Akhalaia	Party Candidate, United National Movement
5 August 2021, PM	
Giorgi Sekhniashvili	Manager of Electoral Lists, Central Election Commission of Georgia
Ketevan Karenashvili	International Relations and Protocol Division, Public Relations Department, Central Election Commission of Georgia
Mariam Begiashvili	EU for dialogue, Project Coordinator (former UNDP Project Manager for IDPs support)
6 August 2021, AM	
Giorgi Shavgulidze	LAG Chairperson, UNDEF Project's Policy and Advocacy Consultant
Irakli Tsulaia	SPF Consultant Lawyer

Annex 4: Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organization
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IT Specialist	Information Technology Specialist
LAG	Consortium Legal Aid Georgia
LPI	Legal Protection Institute
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation
OFPH	Organization Future Prosperity House
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SPF	Social Program Foundation
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US Embassy	United States Embassy
USD	United States Dollar

Annex 5: Data Collection Questions

DAC criterion	Questions
Coherence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the format of the consultations held with the IDP communities? 2. To the best of your knowledge, to what extent, if any, did the project activities duplicate the work of other CSOs or government agencies? 3. How many projects has the LAG implemented so far?
Relevance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was the strategy employed to identify the 10 CSOs? 2. How were the 30 IDP settlements identified? 3. Is there any statistics available regarding discrepancies in the voters' list? 4. What initiatives does the electoral administration have to educate citizens on their rights as voters, including the voters' list accuracy? 5. Could you please elaborate on an opinion that IDPs represent an easy target for manipulation by political actors? 6. Of 272 political parties registered in Georgia, how many have IDPs-related issues in their party programs?
Effectiveness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many Introductory Meetings were held, by whom, when and where? Is the list of participants available? 2. Is the list of 1,050 attendees of 70 training sessions with 15 participants each available? 3. Are the pre-and-post training questionnaires available? 4. Is there documentation, including the list of beneficiaries available related to the 554 legal consultations? How many of these cases were elections-related? 5. What was the rationale behind identifying 20 trainers after the first 20 trainings? 6. According to the Project Document, the publications were supposed to be posted on LAG's website and Facebook page making them available for the wider public. Where on LAG's website and Facebook page could they be found? Why there is no Facebook/website post made after May 15, 2020? 7. Is there any statistics available regarding the number of views the 2 video recordings had? How many times have the 10 articles been accessed?
Efficiency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there a copy of the sub-grant agreements signed with 3 implementing partners available? 2. Could you please elaborate on the main challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic and how you were able to overcome them? 3. What was the added value and responsibilities of each of the members of the partnership? 4. How were the funds distributed among the partners?

<p style="text-align: center;">Impact</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As there were 10 IDP CSOs targeted to be supporting IDPs to participate in electoral processes, why only 5 of them were chosen to be registered for election monitoring? 2. What actions are being taken in relation to the 2021 local municipal elections? By whom? 3. Which CSOs received the observer’s status? 4. As compared to the general population, what are the main preconditions for IDPs to be discouraged and lack basic knowledge with regards to the elections in Georgia as claimed in the Project Document? 5. What was the tactic employed to ensure gender balance? 6. After getting the publications, was there any positive and/or negative feedback from the target audience? 7. Is there statistics available concerning the number of persons with disability or having limited access who received the information materials?
<p style="text-align: center;">Sustainability</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is communication with the target group being maintained? How? 2. Is the legal clinic still active? 3. What actions are being taken to use and further develop the Trainers’ Pool? 4. Were the public debates and trainings recorded and posted on YouTube, Facebook, etc., for viewing by the larger group of IDPs, especially during the COVID-19 related lockdown when the whole world went virtual? 5. Are there any plans for future tracking of IDPs participation in national and local elections, both as electors and as candidates? 6. Is the link to the common social media tool uniting the trainers available? 7. Do the capacitated IDP CSOs maintain connections with more experienced national CSOs specializing in election monitoring?
<p style="text-align: center;">UNDEF value added</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was UNDEF value-added in relation to other initiatives in Georgia, both local and international, that are aimed at promoting the full realization of IDPs political rights?