

OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-LKA_D_4.1

State decision-making processes are more equitable and inclusive to enable women's meaningful participation and leadership.

In the Districts of Mannar and Puttalam, UN Women's joint project with UNOPS on "Promoting Women's Engagement in effective Solid Waste Management to Prevent Conflict in Sri Lanka" funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (2019 – 2021) has brought communities together to develop sustainable solutions for their shared environment – with women at the forefront. More women, including those from minority and displaced communities, are now actively involved in community-level governance by providing direct input to community issues. This has been supported by UN Women's and its partner's work on strengthening 48 Praja Mandala's (PM) – local community governance mechanisms. As a result of the training on collective leadership and promoting gender equality, more women are now engaged at the decision-making level. Women also constitute a majority of members within the revamped PMs, which the office supported to be more inclusive and equitable with capacity building and skill development on PM management, collective leadership, promoting gender equality, and improving their approach to resolving conflicts. 45 village development plans (VDPs) were also collectively developed by PM members, local officials, and community members to identify key problems and needs, and some local councilors have allocated budgets to address these issues. Action grants were provided to implement activities such as compost production and polythene recycling. These initiatives not only reduced improper waste disposal in the area but also provided employment opportunities for PM members. Attitudes towards waste have changed as a result of the project as communities and Local Authorities (LAs) now view waste as an income-generating opportunity. Many PM initiatives have been linked to private sector and State institutes, with the assistance of the project, ensuring their sustainability. LAs too now earn an income from monetising waste by charging a nominal rate from private sector buyers. Furthermore, female local councilors in Puttalam and Mannar are better trained to fulfil their role as elected representatives and have the confidence to identify and implement solutions for community issues. This is in part due to the training, peer exchange, and networking opportunities provided through the newly established District Women Councilors' Caucus which was supported by UN Women and its partner. More young people are also engaged in raising community awareness on environmental issues and have developed innovative solutions to tackle improper waste disposal by installing collection points for segregated waste and inventing an 'eco-brick' made of crushed plastic. This is due to the formation of four Youth Task Forces (YTFs), by UN Women and its partner which is attached to the LAs in Puttalam. Notably, there is gender parity within the YTF membership as well as at the leadership level, paving the way for young women to be more engaged in their communities. This has been highly successful, as the Commissioner of Local Government for the North-Western Province has instructed all Puttalam LAs to establish YTFs. The Commissioner commended the project for having supported LAs and communities in the area to set up a better platform to prevent conflict by bringing together key elements of social cohesion; women's leadership and solid waste management.

OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-LKA_D_4.2

Empowered military and war widows have sustainable livelihoods, and access social support services with dignity.

Significant challenges faced throughout the year, as a result of COVID-19, intermittent lockdowns, travel, and

other restrictions, collectively prevented the joint project “Empowering communities to prevent violence against women in Mannar” from undertaking the required assessments to proceed with the sequence of activities. In the latter quarter of 2021, the project began to make progress, as COVID-19 restrictions eased. Progress includes obtaining the (verbal) endorsement of the project by the local government and strengthened collaboration with local officials, which will continue to support the project's implementation in 2022.

OUTCOME XM-DAC-41146-LKA_D_4.4

Women, including those in particularly vulnerable situations, will be empowered to strengthen the peacebuilding process, promote social cohesion and contribute towards lasting peace in Sri Lanka.

Through UN Women’s engagement in the joint project “Support to Durable Resettlement”, 125 women returnees in Mullaitivu are better trained in developing business ideas for income generation. 100 women developed business plans and applied for in-kind assistance to improve or expand their business. More than 75 per cent have begun improving their businesses with the knowledge, skills and exposure gained through UN Women’s and partner’s efforts. Further, 27 leaders of 18 community-based organisations (CBOs) have enhanced their knowledge of CBO management and are better trained to advocate with local government on community and gender equality issues. This has helped create a more conducive environment for women's businesses to thrive. Improving women’s financial autonomy contributes to more inclusive and durable peace, by preventing and addressing economic drivers of conflict and inequality. It also provides a stronger impetus and space for women to be more involved in local governance, as they directly contribute to the economy. Moreover, there is increased understanding among local government and community stakeholders on putting women's needs and priorities at the center of urban planning to ensure safety for all. This is a result of the 'women’s safety audit of public spaces' introduced by UN Women and its partner and carried out by community members including women, local councillors, local officials, and police officers. Members of local authorities, local officials, and community leaders have agreed on the findings and are committed to ensuring safe public spaces. Furthermore, the draft National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS) is now stronger in representing the needs and voices of women across the country. The NAP WPS was validated by key stakeholders including CSOs who are at the forefront of working towards women’s rights and empowerment within diverse communities. Implementing agencies – both government and non-governmental – are more informed, capable, and connected to implement the NAP WPS (once adopted) at local levels, through training and networks built by UN Women. These agencies include local councillors, local officials, CSOs, CBOs, and activists.