



IN BRIEF



INDEPENDENT CORPORATE EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN'S APPROACH TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PREVENTION AND RESPONSE: NAVIGATING CHANGES IN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXTS

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This brief summarizes the corporate evaluation of UN Women's approach to violence against women and girls (VAWG) prevention and response, with a focus on navigating changes in global and regional contexts. The purpose of this evaluation was to contribute to strategic decision-making, learning and accountability. The evaluation examined the relevance, adaptability, effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of UN Women's support to strengthening VAWG prevention and response over the four-year period from June 2020 to June 2024. It also included an equity-focused lens on gender equality and leave no one behind. The geographic scope of the evaluation covered UN Women's programming globally and across all six regions.

THE KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS WERE:

1. To what extent has UN Women's work on VAWG prevention and response adapted to the needs and concerns of women, and to priority policy areas? (Relevance/Adaptability)
2. How effectively has UN Women's support contributed to VAWG prevention and response? (Effectiveness)
3. To what extent is UN Women's approach coherent with the work of other partners in this space (UN agencies and non-UN actors)? (Coherence)
4. In what ways are the principles of leave no one behind, human rights, including disability inclusion, and gender equality integrated in VAWG prevention and response? (Equity)
5. What is UN Women's approach to safeguarding gains and ensuring sustainability in this area of work? (Sustainability)

The evaluation included an assessment of results achieved under UN Women's previous (2018–2021) and current (2022–2025) Strategic Plans. The evaluation was scoped to focus primarily on assessing contributions to systemic outcomes related to positive social norms and women's access to services, goods and resources. To avoid overlap with concurrent evaluations and assessments, the Spotlight Initiative and the United Nations Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women were outside the scope of the evaluation.

The evaluation is intended for use primarily by the UN Women Executive Board, UN Women's senior management, UN Women's Ending Violence Against Women section, UN Women Regional and Country Offices designing and implementing programming for the prevention and response to VAWG, in addition to other personnel and partners working on or with an interest in the issue.

Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation methodology consisted of a **mixed-methods design and theory-based approach**, building on a reconstructed theory of change. The evaluation team employed a combination of qualitative content analysis, quantitative descriptive statistics and contribution analysis to facilitate a summative assessment of UN Women's contributions towards outcome and impact-level results. The evaluation was learning-focused and allowed for open-ended questions/lessons to facilitate a forward-looking assessment to inform UN Women's current and upcoming Strategic Plan (2026–2029).

The evaluation team undertook primary and secondary data collection through semi-structured interviews and in-depth desk reviews at the global level, and through eight country and regional programme case studies. The case studies included a combination of in-person and virtual data collection in Bolivia, Egypt, India, Tanzania, Viet Nam and regional eliminating violence against women and girls (EVAWG) programmes in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and West and Central Africa.

The evaluation team undertook an overall portfolio review and programme reviews of key global EVAWG initiatives, including the Essential Services Package, Prevention

Frameworks and Initiatives; the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces with Women and Girls Flagship Initiative; and the Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action to End Violence Against Women programme. The evaluation team also conducted two online surveys fielded to relevant internal stakeholders and external partners at global, regional and country levels.

In total, 326 stakeholders (82 per cent female, 17 per cent male and 1 per cent prefer not to say) were consulted as part of the evaluation; 172 stakeholders (83 per cent female, 17 per cent male) were engaged through semi-structured interviews (key informant interviews and focus group discussions); and the online surveys received 154 responses (30 per cent internal response rate, 46 per cent external response rate). Consulted stakeholders included key UN Women personnel working on EVAWG and other thematic areas, government partners, Member States and donors, civil society organizations (CSOs) and women's rights organizations (WROs), other partners such as those from academia and the private sector, and UN agencies in the EVAWG space.

DATA COLLECTED FOR THIS EVALUATION

Mixed method data



Primary qualitative and quantitative data was collected and triangulated
Secondary data sources include:
Quantum, Transparency portal, DAMS

172 stakeholder interviews



Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions
(N = 142 female, 30 male)

300+ documents reviewed



Desk review, synthesis and portfolio analysis of annual workplans, Strategic Notes, evaluations, project and programme documents, etc.

8 case studies



5 country case studies: Bolivia, Egypt, India, Tanzania and Viet Nam;
3 regional programmes in: Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and West and Central Africa

2 online surveys, 154 respondents



UN Women personnel
(N = 48; 30% response rate)
UN Women partners
(N = 106; 46% response rate)

4 IES country visits



Members of the IES evaluation team led country visits to gather data and insights from UN Women personnel and external stakeholders in Bolivia, India, Tanzania and Viet Nam.

Key conclusions

CONCLUSION 1.

UN Women's EVAWG approach has been responsive to changing contexts and growing forms of violence. By leveraging established areas of work, the Entity was particularly agile in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. While some Country Offices working in development contexts were able to respond to other emerging crises and the increase in technology facilitated gender-based violence (TF GBV), there is scope to further strengthen and expand strategic guidance, frameworks and tools to support these areas of work.

(Relevance/Adaptability, Coherence and Effectiveness)

CONCLUSION 2.

UN Women's EVAWG work has been effective in advancing normative changes and strengthening the provision of survivor-centred services. Successful strategies included engagement of diverse coalitions of EVAWG actors (including multiple key line ministries); identifying strategic opportunities to strengthen implementation of laws; and focusing on women's access to justice. While various initiatives have supported VAWG prevention efforts, including through community mobilization, awareness-raising and piloting interventions in male-dominated sectors, work on social norms change for EVAWG needs to be strengthened. This includes strengthening strategies to engage men and boys to transform patriarchal masculinities at community and institutional levels. (Effectiveness, Coherence, Sustainability)

CONCLUSION 3.

UN Women's EVAWG work included some cross-thematic approaches, particularly with Women's Economic Empowerment. However, synergies with other thematic areas were uneven in some cases and not consistently applied across all EVAWG areas of work. Efforts were hindered to some extent by the Entity's thematic structure and thematic funding modalities. (Effectiveness, Sustainability)

CONCLUSION 4.

UN Women continues to play a pivotal role in advancing global norms, developing guidance documents and supporting programming and data frameworks related to VAWG prevention and response. Collaborating with various stakeholders, UN Women has advanced and tailored global frameworks and promoted more coordinated EVAWG initiatives at the country level. While joint

programming and collaboration among UN agencies continue to be critical for developing comprehensive EVAWG initiatives, challenges with the coherence of internal systems and resource allocation persist. (Coherence, Effectiveness)

CONCLUSION 5.

UN Women plays a key role in strengthening WROs and CSOs, particularly by acting as a convenor and amplifying voices from the women's movement. UN Women worked closely with these organizations in advocating for EVAWG laws and policies; participating in data collection/research; raising awareness and community mobilization to address social norms; building capacity for VAWG prevention and response; and other co-creation processes related to EVAWG programming. There is a need to better support smaller, community-based organizations, especially in challenging contexts, and further invest in movement building at national and grassroots levels. (Coherence, Effectiveness)

CONCLUSION 6.

UN Women's approach to EVAWG incorporates an intersectional lens, focusing on addressing intersecting forms of discrimination that various groups of women may experience, and which heighten their risk of experiencing violence. Key progress has been made in disability inclusion and outreach to rural women, though challenges remain in scaling interventions and strengthening knowledge exchange. There is also a need for more comprehensive guidance on addressing specific groups in situations of vulnerability, including those that are the most difficult to reach due to cultural sensitivities or other factors. (Equity)

CONCLUSION 7.

UN Women's efforts to embed sustainable programming elements into its EVAWG work are likely to support and safeguard gains in some contexts. Successful strategies included institutional capacity-building and support to leveraging and expanding domestically available funding for VAWG prevention and response. However, reliance on relatively short-term funding in some countries is hindering the development of programming that is holistic and able to contribute towards sustainable change. (Sustainability, Coherence)

Recommendations



RECOMMENDATION 1.

Continue to refine and roll out existing guidance, and develop further guidance, frameworks and tools to adapt and strengthen EVAWG programming in **response to persistent and emerging priorities** (e.g. across the HDP nexus and in response to growing TF GBV).



RECOMMENDATION 2.

Further enhance global, regional and country-level **support to WROs and grassroots/smaller CSOs** working on VAWG prevention and response, including through a diversified donor/partner base.



RECOMMENDATION 3.

Continue to roll out comprehensive frameworks on prevention and response that include a focus on **social norms change at multiple levels** and further refine and/or develop new tools/guidance to further support institutional norms change, including through multiple strategies to engage with men and boys.



RECOMMENDATION 4.

Strengthen and adapt approaches to foster **more comprehensive and longer-term EVAWG programming** at the country level.



RECOMMENDATION 5.

Building on UN Women's **role as convenor** in the EVAWG space, continue to strengthen the multi-stakeholder approach and **scale up** successful pilot initiatives at the country level.