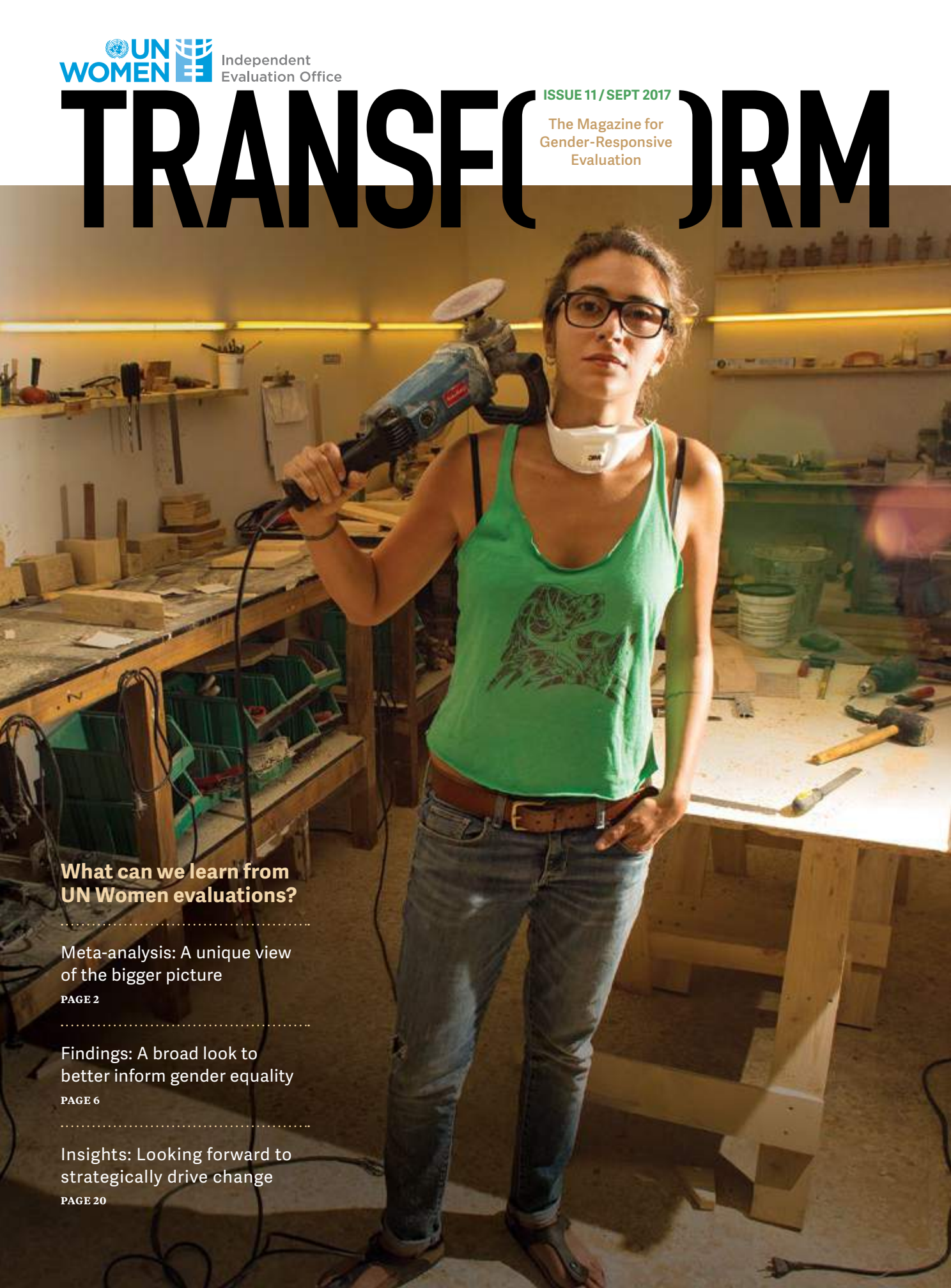


# TRANSFORM

A woman with glasses and a green tank top is standing in a workshop, holding a blue power sander. She is wearing a white neck brace. The workshop has wooden workbenches, shelves with tools, and various materials.

## What can we learn from UN Women evaluations?

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of the bigger picture

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strategically drive change

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## Dear Readers,

As part of its continuous effort to promote learning and accountability, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Independent Evaluation Office undertakes an annual meta-analysis to ensure that the body of evidence produced by corporate and decentralized evaluations is synthesized to help strengthen programming and organizational effectiveness.

This year's meta-analysis contributes to this effort by synthesizing insights and drivers of change from multiple evaluations. The analysis transformed evaluative evidences into accessible knowledge for future systematic strengthening of programming, organizational effectiveness and the evaluation function. The analysis will help contribute to better understanding of the context in which ongoing and new initiatives will be implemented.

We hope you find the synthesis useful to further reflect on and feed the learning into future thinking and practices to drive transformative change on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

**Inga Sniukaite**

*Director a.i., Independent Evaluation Office*

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## *Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.*

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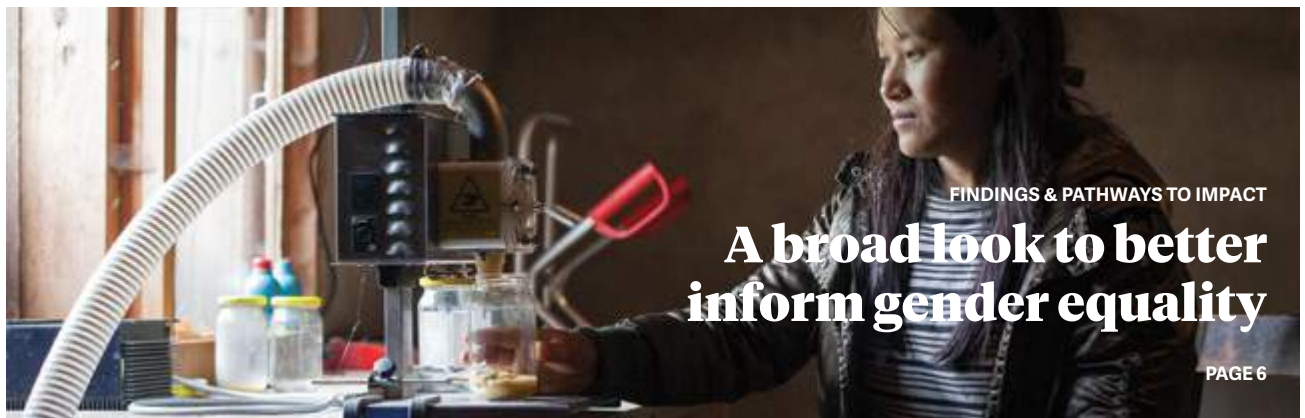
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## A meta-analysis of UN Women evaluations in 2016

Meta-analysis:  
A unique view of  
the bigger picture

PAGE 2



### INSIGHTS

Looking forward  
to strategically  
drive change

PAGE 20

The meta-analysis  
approach:  
Synthesizing  
evidence

PAGE 28





PORTRAIT OF AMIRA ABI KHALIL. SHE HAS OWNED AND OPERATED HER BRICK AND STONE TRADING COMPANY FOR EIGHTEEN YEARS SINCE 1997. LEBANON EMERGED FROM A 15-YEAR CIVIL WAR IN 1990, BEGINNING ITS SLOW BUT STEADY RECOVERY. TODAY IT IS CONSIDERED AN UPPER-MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRY, BUT ECONOMIC GAINS ARE INEQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED AMONG SOCIAL GROUPS AND SKEWED TOWARDS URBAN AREAS.



---

## A unique view of the bigger picture

---

*The successful positioning of UN Women as a knowledge-based organization on gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) rests in part on its ability to harness, communicate and use evidence and knowledge from evaluations.*

---

UN Women has a growing body of evidence from evaluations and has taken significant steps to strengthen results-based management (RBM), program performance, and learning from evaluations. Lessons drawn from evaluations have spurred the development of new approaches and helped to make the case to either reinforce ongoing work as appropriate, or to inform changes in UN Women approaches and business processes.

UN Women, as a knowledge-based organization, continuously seeks ways to accelerate its development results through improved organizational effectiveness. To further facilitate the review of evaluative evidence and transform it into accessible knowledge, the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office annually produces a meta-analysis report. The aggregation and synthesis of evidence from multiple evaluations is proved to be a potent approach to better understand what kinds of programmatic approaches and interventions are working best across the range of countries UN Women serves.

By examining a wide range of evaluations to identify common

findings and conclusions, this year's meta-analysis emphasized how UN Women interventions consistently contribute to gender equality outcomes and policy changes, driven by its decentralized capacity, and how it facilitates meaningful relations and dialogue among diverse stakeholders. The analysis also pointed out how the organization can further enhance efficiency and sustainability of its interventions. Overall, UN Women's development effectiveness is being driven by its strategic planning processes, the relevance of its interventions, and its efficiency in using limited resources. Future strategies to augment UN Women's existing achievements can include nurturing gender equality expertise in national systems, investing in UN Women's own expertise in resource mobilization and data systems, and deeper integration of programming and coordination through country-level strategic notes.

Hopefully this meta-analysis will help UN Women staff in their current efforts as well as assist them in striving towards the bigger picture of driving transformational change in pursuit of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

---

# Unique insights for gender equality

PORTRAIT OF CLOTHING  
DESIGNER LARA KHOURY IN HER  
STUDIO IN BEIRUT.

The UN Women Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) considers the meta-evaluation to be a systematic and formal assessment of the quality of evaluation reports against UN Evaluation Group evaluation standards, and the meta-analysis to be an instrument to synthesize evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations from a series of evaluations that meet UN Evaluation Group quality standards.

In the current Corporate Evaluation Plan (2014–2017), annual meta-analyses are scheduled to ensure that the body of evidence produced by evaluations, including those managed by field offices, can be consolidated and inform corporate-level policies and strategies. This meta-analysis aggregated and synthesized information generated from 36 corporate and

decentralized evaluations in 2016 that were submitted to GERAAS.

The purpose of this meta-analysis is to capture the key insights from evaluation reports rated satisfactory or higher according to UN Women standards. The findings will be used to inform the implementation of the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021.

**META-EVALUATION:**  
An assessment of the  
quality of evaluations.

**META-ANALYSIS:**  
A synthesis of findings,  
conclusions and  
recommendations  
from various evaluations.

## Analysis

**36** **52**  
EVALUATIONS COUNTRIES

## Drivers of change



EVIDENCE  
DATA &  
STATISTICS



KNOWLEDGE  
HUB



ALLIANCE  
BUILDING &  
MOVEMENT  
FOR CHANGE



INNOVATION &  
TECHNOLOGY



YOUTH  
ENGAGEMENT



SOUTH-SOUTH  
COOPERATION

WHAT DO I NEED  
TO KNOW TO  
MANAGE OR  
CONDUCT AN  
EVALUATION AT  
UN WOMEN?

HOW CAN  
EVALUATION BE  
A DRIVER FOR  
CHANGE TOWARDS  
GENDER EQUALITY  
AND WOMEN'S  
EMPOWERMENT?

HOW IS GENDER-  
RESPONSIVE  
EVALUATION  
DIFFERENT  
FROM OTHER  
EVALUATION?

# HOW TO MANAGE GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION

## EVALUATION HANDBOOK



Find out how UN Women manages gender-responsive evaluation  
with the new UN Women Evaluation Handbook:  
*How to manage gender responsive evaluation.*

The Handbook is available at:  
<http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org>




Independent  
Evaluation Office





BEEKEEPING IN BUMTHANG, BHUTAN –  
THIS WOMAN KEEPS BEES AS A MEANS  
OF INDEPENDENT INCOME.





FINDINGS & PATHWAYS TO IMPACT

---

# A broad look to better inform gender equality

---

*UN Women interventions have maintained good performance levels in terms of relevance and effectiveness for development results. There is also new evidence of substantive improvement in RBM systems in 2016, while sustainability and efficiency have the greatest potential for continued improvement.*

---

**W**hile individual interventions vary in development effectiveness, UN Women is consistently and effectively contributing to development outcomes, national policies, and the needs of women. Broadly, evaluations confirmed the decentralized capacity as central to strengthening UN Women's leadership on gender equality; and facilitating meaningful relations and dialogue between diverse stakeholders in improving effectiveness across all country contexts. Future strategies to augment UN Women's existing achievements can include nurturing gender equality expertise in national systems, investing in UN Women's own expertise in resource mobilization and data systems, and deeper integration of programming and coordination through country-level strategic notes.



CHANDRA KALA THAPA, ONE OF MANY SMALL-HOLDER WOMEN FARMERS FROM RANICHURI VILLAGE IN SINDHULI DISTRICT



## FINDINGS

### Development Effectiveness

#### SATISFACTORY RATINGS (%) \*



\* The percentage of satisfactory rating is based on positive findings about UN Women's performance.

## RELEVANCE

### Evidence of Relevance

**96%**

#### SUB-CRITERIA

#### SATISFACTORY RATINGS (%)

Programmes and projects are suited to the needs and/or priorities of the target group

**97%**

Projects and programmes align with national development goals.

**94%**

Effective partnerships with governments, bilateral and multilateral development and humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations for planning, coordination and implementation of support to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

**94%**

**FINDING 1:** The relevance of UN Women interventions has been increasingly positive since 2013, with more recent improvements being in improving relationships with partners.

The evaluative findings on the relevance of UN Women interventions have been increasingly positive since tracking began in 2013. UN

Women programming processes have also demonstrated a consistent capacity to design interventions that are found to be relevant to the needs of women and girls and to national policy goals. While this has continued to consolidate, in 2016, a substantive improvement in the strength of working relationships between UN Women and its partners was registered.



OUTSIDE NATIONAL LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY HEADQUARTERS, BURMA APRIL 2012



ABARCA, HUMBERTO



ALYAMI, MOHAMMED



AMER, AWNY



BAMBERGER, MICHAEL



BARQAWI, MARAM



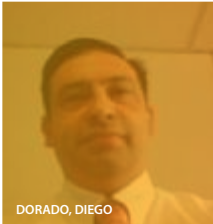
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CENTENO, EDUARDO



DONALDSON, STEWART I



DORADO, DIEGO



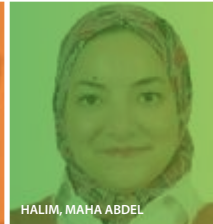
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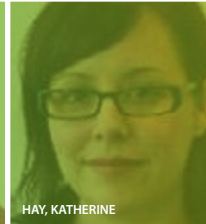
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FONT, LEOPOLDO



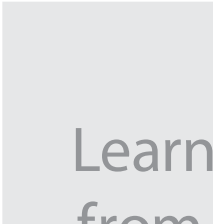
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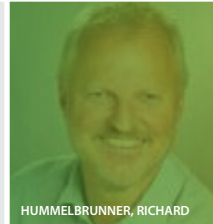


HEIDER, CAROLINE



LUSTHAUS, CHARLES

Learn **at your pace**,  
from **World Level Experts**,  
at **no cost**.



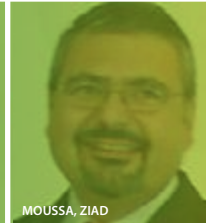
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LUNDGREN, HANS



SEGONE, MARCO



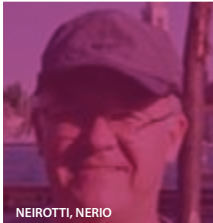
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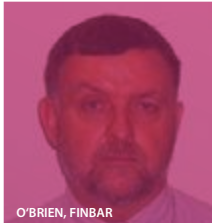
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RONNY RICARDO



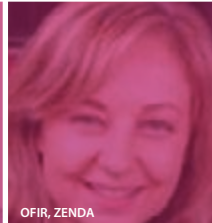
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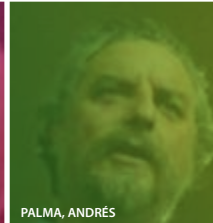
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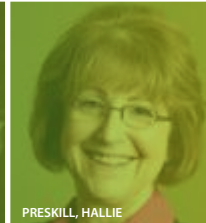
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OFIR, ZENDA



PALMA, ANDRÉS



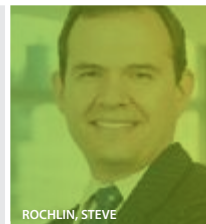
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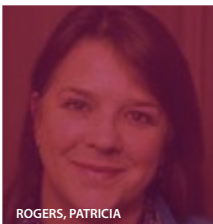
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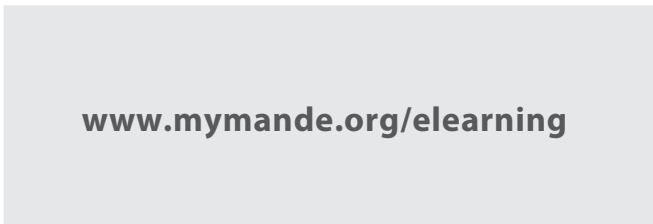
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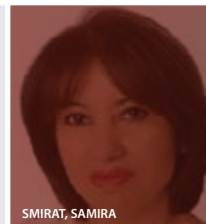
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[www.mymande.org/elearning](http://www.mymande.org/elearning)



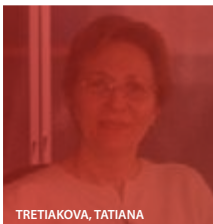
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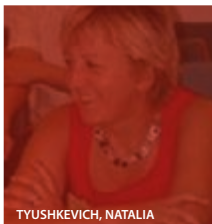
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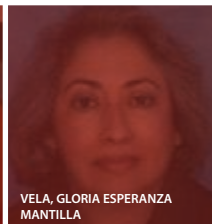
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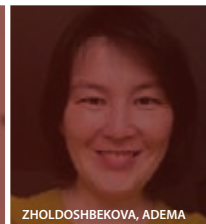
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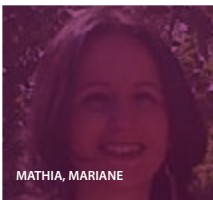
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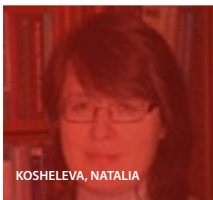
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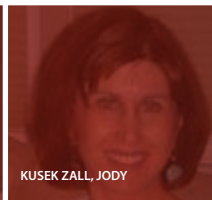
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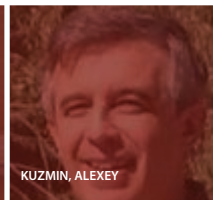
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KUSEK ZALL, JODY



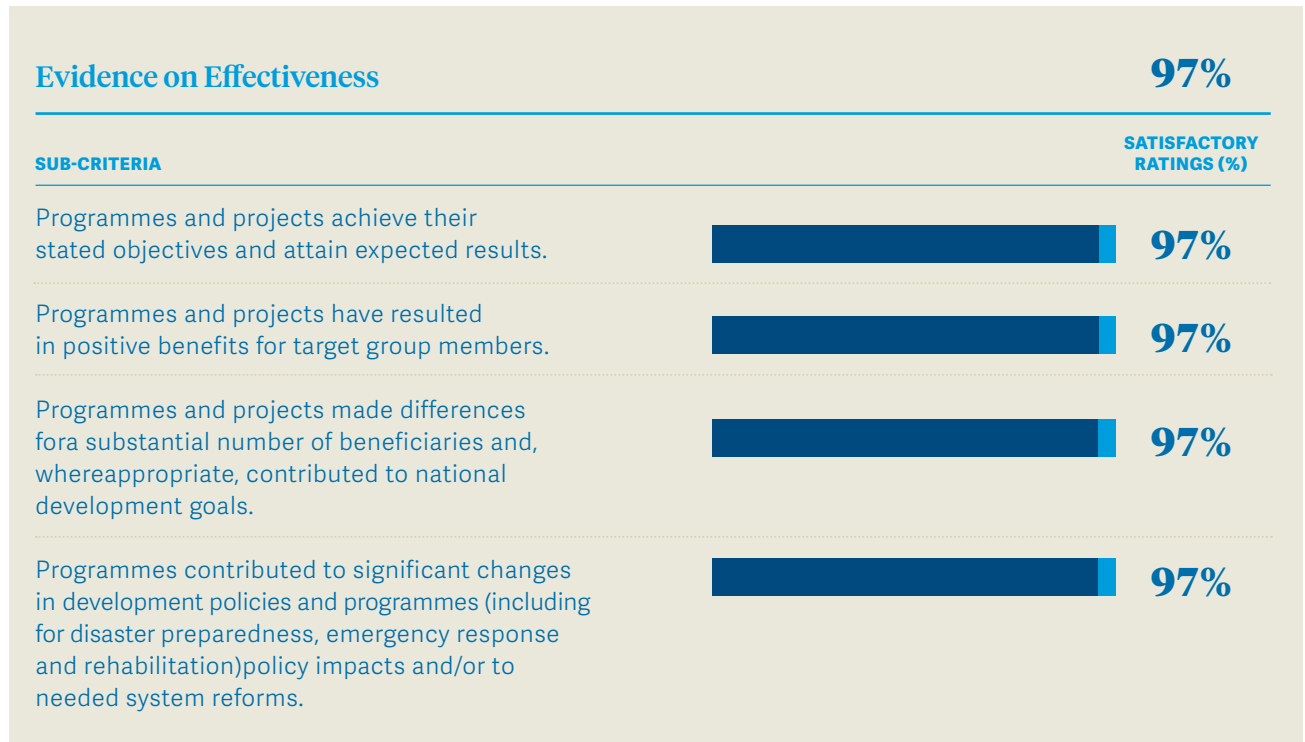
KUZMIN, ALEXEY



MENON, SARASWATHI



## EFFECTIVENESS



**FINDING 2:** The establishment of decentralized capacity has been central to establishing UN Women's leadership on gender equality. Expanding this leadership role at the country-level requires closer integration of UN coordination and operational programming within strategic notes.

Evaluations reveal a continuing positive trend since 2013 in the performance of UN Women interventions in achieving their stated objectives. The meta-analysis shows that UN Women supported interventions were satisfactorily delivering the majority of their planned

outputs or at least contributed to their most important outcomes.

Several evaluations found that UN Women's leadership and management capability has been strengthened through the development of the regional architecture. This is essential to maintaining the political will, commitment and leadership at the highest levels to financing gender equality. UN Women was also recognized by both corporate and regional evaluations as offering leadership in joint UN advocacy efforts and campaigns, including regularly bringing the GEEW agenda and key issues to the table and convening partners on GEEW topics to initiate action within and outside the group of UN agencies.



*“Several evaluations found that UN Women’s leadership and management capability has been strengthened through the development of the regional architecture.”*



JANYL BAISHEVA (CENTER), HEAD OF THE ALTYN OIMOK PUBLIC ORGANIZATION THAT RUNS THE ALTYN OIMOK CRAFT SHOP, HELPS FELLOW WORKERS WITH A COMPLICATED PROCESS USED TO MAKE RAW WOOL MORE USABLE IN HANDICRAFTS.

## Four main examples of high-level outcomes were identified in the portfolio of evaluations:

- Enhancing the collective capability of duty bearers at the national and local level to understand, plan for, localize and monitor actions for GEEW
- Giving legitimacy to forgotten issues (such as survivors of violence in post-emergency countries) and helping to tip the scales towards recognition by duty bearers, including upscaling new ideas and good practices into institutional and national policy change
- Enhancing the symbolic and strategic voice of civil society organizations and groups of women through access to resources, self-sufficiency and leadership development
- Developing national action plans for GEEW, including budgeting for the implementation of these plans

The main challenges to achieving effectiveness were found to be limited geographical coverage of projects (due to resource constraints), project durations that were too short to achieve transformational objectives, and factors outside the control of UN Women. While the funding environment is acknowledged by evaluations as being constrained and not amenable to new human resources, two specific sets of expertise were identified as being in short-supply while having strong potential for making a high return on investment: (1) specialist fundraising expertise to diversify and amplify resource-mobilization throughout the regional architecture; and (2) specialist information technology expertise to amplify UN Women's emerging strengths in knowledge and evidence.

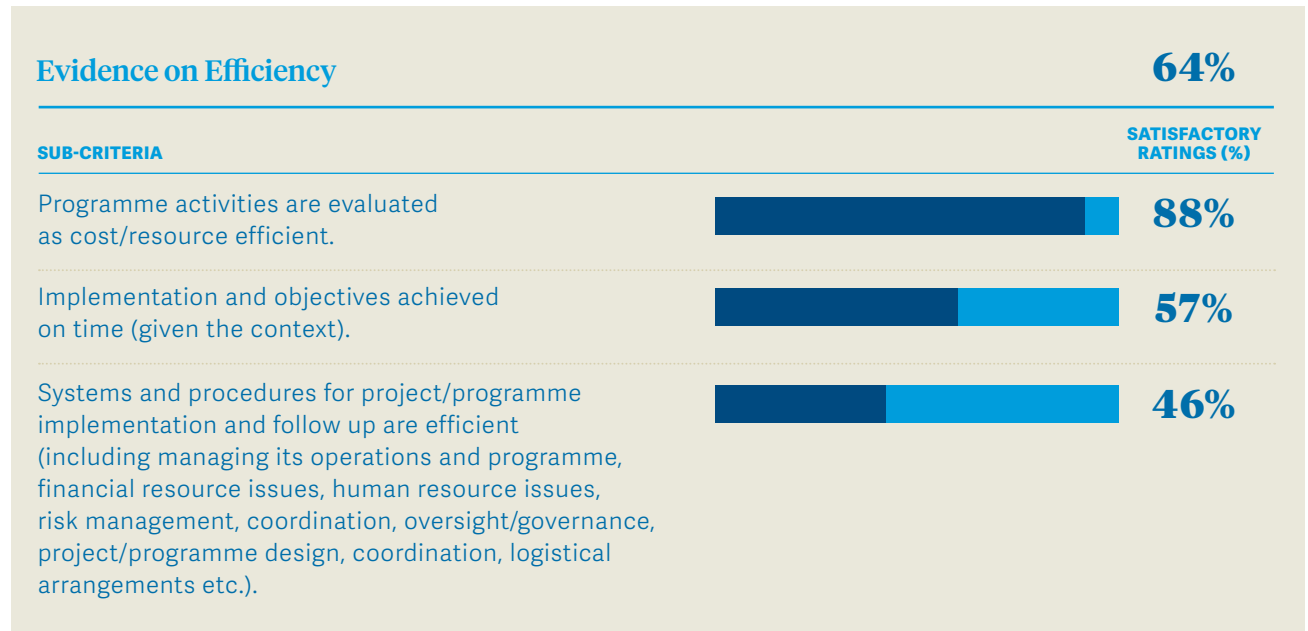
Emphasis was also placed on the importance of continuing to ensure that UN Women's business model supports collective efforts of multiple stakeholders to ensure accountability and achieve programmatic objectives.



RURAL WOMEN FROM AROUND EFATE GATHER TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN AT ERAKOR VILLAGE IN OCTOBER 2016.



## EFFICIENCY



**FINDING 3: UN Women's systems are supporting efficient use of the resources that are currently available to the organization. This represents an improvement on ratings over the years.**

The main OECD-DAC indicator for efficiency was found to be fulfilled to a satisfactory level in the majority of the evaluations. Many evaluations, at all levels, recognized and validated the high level of efficiency and transparency that UN Women has corporately achieved in its financial management. The improvements in efficiency may primarily reflect the maturation of UN Women's regional architecture and its supporting operations systems. At the same time, most UN Women evaluations identified challenges in relation to the



FATEN AHMED HOLDS HER ONE YEAR OLD SON, AHMED WHILE LISTENING TO SOME ADVISE FROM A MATERNITY HEALTH WORKER.

timeliness of implementation and follow-up procedures.

Given constraints in the overall levels of resourcing, the priorities for UN Women to strengthen its efficiency include: continuing to reinforce the financial management capacities of strategic partners, avoiding delays in fund disbursement, and supporting national partners to execute programs on time.

*Many evaluations, at all levels, recognized and validated the high level of efficiency and transparency that UN Women has corporately achieved in its financial management.*

# WHAT WORKS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

---

Check out the **GENDER EQUALITY EVALUATION PORTAL** at  
> [Genderevaluation.unwomen.org](https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org)

The portal makes available more than 500 evaluations and helps promote the exchange of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations related to gender and development.

*Please share your evaluations by clicking 'join'!*

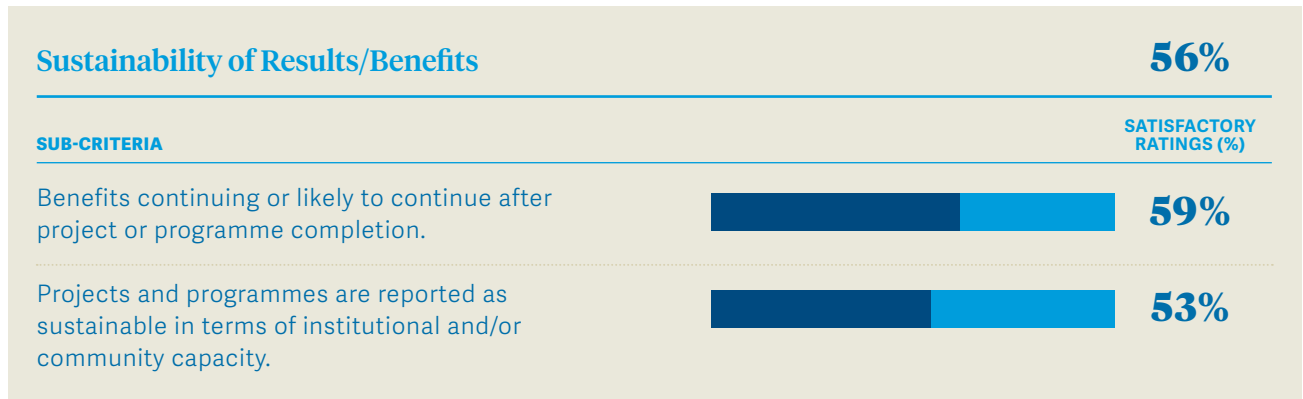


Independent  
Evaluation Office





## SUSTAINABILITY



**FINDING 4: Sustainability across UN Women's operational portfolio was found to be mixed, with evidence that achievements are likely to continue increasing when they have been supported through longer programming cycles.**

While pathways to sustainability vary across UN Women's programmatic contexts, they are bound together by the positive effects on sustainability of participatory approaches, co-creation and longer-term commitment. Given the focus of the 2016 evaluation portfolio on higher-level outcomes (which relate mostly to policy change), evaluations mostly concluded that policy benefits will naturally be continued due to the nature of policy as an instrument

of change. At the same time, evaluations highlight a gap in the evaluation evidence-base in terms of a need for more rigorous examination of the institutional environment and policy economy that support implementation of policy commitments.

The meta-analysis showed that two-thirds of the evaluations reported satisfactory or better results regarding the likelihood that program benefits would continue after project or program completion. A major factor explaining this finding is the continued reliance by government and civil society partners on external program funding. Another factor that was cited by evaluations for the relatively limited sustainability of program benefits is the absence of a clear and well-planned exit strategy and the weak organizational capacities of

some of the UN Women partner organizations.

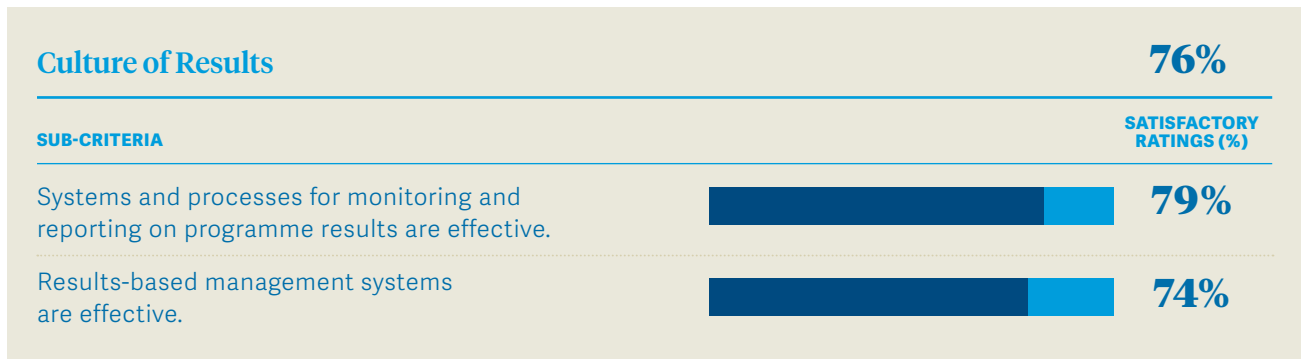
In low capacity environments, findings on sustainability emphasized the ownership and capacity of government and civil society organizations. In high capacity contexts evaluations emphasized the diffusion of the gender equality agenda into a more diverse group of stakeholders (including knowledge institutions, movements, and businesses). Since evaluations have largely concluded that the knowledge function is the centerpiece of UN Women's effectiveness, sustaining this at the country level requires building up an inclusive national "ecosystem" of gender equality experts and champions who can support "the movement".

*Another factor for the relatively limited sustainability of program benefits is the absence of a clear and well-planned exit strategy and the weak organizational capacities of some of the UN Women partner organizations.*



SOLAR ENGINEERING STUDENT FROM MALAWI, TRAINING IN INDIA

## RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT



**FINDING 5:** Evaluations found a strengthened adequacy of UN Women RBM systems compared to previous years, which largely validates the effectiveness of the work recently done to implement the corporate results management system and the organizational focus on RBM.

Evaluations found substantive improvement in RBM systems since 2013, while also noting this area still has the potential for continued improvement in the future. The

meta-analysis found that 79 per cent of evaluations reported that monitoring and reporting systems were at least “appropriate... well established and report regularly” (according to OECD-DAC rubric), and 74 per cent found that an “RBM system is in place and produces regular reports on program performance” (according to OECD-DAC rubric). However, the quality of these systems and processes appeared to be varied. The most promising area for further improvement was strengthening indicators for monitoring human rights based approaches to programming.

The increased coverage of RBM systems noted by evaluations may be due to three effects: (1) the presence of more strategic evaluations in the 2016 portfolio that take a more holistic view of management systems and culture than project-level output evaluations, (2) the strong focus on RBM within UN Women including the global roll-out of the corporate results management system, and (3) the emphasis in previous meta-analyses for the need for more data on RBM feeding through to evaluation terms of reference.



YOUTH DIALOGUE ON GENDER EQUALITY



## NEW FEATURE: PATHWAYS TO IMPACT

As UN Women continues to mature, its key constituencies need information not only about the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of UN Women's interventions but also about their impact in changing women's and girls' lives around the world. Social change for gender equality requires transformative approaches to address the root causes of discrimination and exclusion. Such change is challenging to measure due to its nonlinear, long-term and multidimensional nature. Having this complexity in mind, the Independent Evaluation Office will more systematically explore the feasibility of tracking and communicating UN Women's impact through evaluations.

### CAMBODIA

#### **USING A HOLISTIC, MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO DEAL WITH COMPLEX SETS OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, LEGAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES TO TACKLE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Two UN Women projects, "Strengthening a Participatory, Evidence Based Formulation of a Comprehensive Action Plan to End Violence Against Girls in Cambodia" and "Implementation of the 2nd Cambodian National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (2nd NAPVAW)", took a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach to addressing the complexity of responding to ending violence against women. Strategic areas included primary prevention, legal protection and multi-sectoral services, laws and policies, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation.

Although attribution is a problem many development partners face when evaluating impact on this broad-ranging problem, in this case, evaluation findings indicated that the UN Women programs had an influence on the creation of a positive environment for human rights and gender equality.

Source: UN Women Cambodia. 2016. Final Evaluation of Two UN Women Projects: "Strengthening a Participatory, Evidence Based formulation of a Comprehensive Action Plan to End Violence Against Girls in Cambodia" and "Implementation of the 2nd Cambodian National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (2nd NAPVAW)".

### ETHIOPIA

#### **DRIVING MULTIPLIERS AND SCALE-UP THROUGH INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS**

The country portfolio evaluation in Ethiopia showed that effective partnerships with civil society organizations have also created effective models of partnering with government. It also demonstrated innovative models for designing and delivering rights-oriented services to poor and vulnerable women and girls.

This was particularly evident in UN Women's programs implemented in partnership with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church-Development Wing. Given the tremendous influence of religious and traditional leaders in Ethiopian society, such an approach has the chance to be translated into changes in community attitudes and norms, creating a supporting environment for ending violence against women and challenging the structural bottlenecks that undermine gender equality in the country.

Evidence from the country portfolio evaluation

further showed that UN Women's partnership with a national non-governmental association called Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development was effective in creating safe spaces for survivors of violence through legal support, social and economic integration, and provision of essential supports and services including psychosocial and medical supports. The holistic approach and the strategy used to build a strong linkage and referral system with government, community, law enforcement, medical facilities and women's affairs organizations produced a replicable model that is now being introduced in other regions of the country.

**Effective partnerships with civil society can create models of partnering with governments.**

Source: UN Women Ethiopia. 2016. Country Portfolio Evaluation of UN Women Strategic Note.





## PAKISTAN

**REACHING THE EXCLUDED HELPS DRIVE LONG-TERM IMPACT**

In Pakistan, a project that focuses on improving economic empowerment of women home-based workers has been successful in reaching some of the most vulnerable and poor women in urban and rural locations. Despite the fact that implementing partners faced challenges of working in insecure environments, linkages and trust within their communities to reach the disempowered helped contribute to the project's success.

Through the work of the implementing partners, diversification of skills amongst women home-based workers gave them new access to alternative income generation possibilities, and access to new technologies that increased their work potential. This resulted in an increase in productivity, better quality products, regular and continuous work, creation of market linkages, and increase in women's entrepreneurship. Partners across the board succeeded in considerably increasing the income of women home-based workers; in some cases, incomes doubled. Working

conditions improved, and there was increased access to institutions at the local government level, such as the National Database and Registration Authority, which makes computerized national identity cards.

There was also constant advocacy on issues related to women home-based workers, particularly the approval of policies for legal protection of all home-based workers, and their legislation and implementation. Through the implementing partners and UN Women's consistent advocacy, the Punjab government in 2014 allocated PKR 77 million (USD 755,000) to establish skill centers for women home-based workers in three districts.

**In challenging environments, trust within the community helped reach the disempowered and contributed to the project's success.**

Source: UN Women Pakistan, 2016. Towards Gender Equality: Women's Economic Empowerment for Home Based Workers, Phase II (2012-2015), Pakistan.

## JORDAN

**PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION TO EMPOWER WOMEN**

In an evaluation of a UN Women project on social cohesion in Jordan, evaluation data, highlighting human and social capital, strongly indicated that work in safe spaces contributed to positively influencing existing behavioral change processes, women's mobility to participate in advocacy, and capacity-building interventions.

The project successfully achieved its stated results and even exceeded its targets in many areas. Particularly strong contributions were made through interventions that gave women access to safe spaces and allowed their participation in different community initiatives. The evaluation found that the value of such interventions extended beyond financial benefits—women

enrolled in the economic elements of the program stated that it had helped them build their employability and social capital. Despite the relative short duration of the project's work inside the safe spaces, the number of people who visited the space expanded dramatically. The quality of the social cohesion trainers and the content of the training meant it was possible to build trust for such a safe environment for women.

However, owing to the short-term nature of the intervention, it was not possible to conclude whether or not interventions minimized domestic and gender-based violence among the beneficiary population.

Source: UN Women Jordan, 2016. Final Evaluation of the UN Women Project on Social Cohesion, Service Delivery and Gender Equality, Jordan.





# Looking forward to strategically drive change

*This section presents the results of the qualitative synthesis as they relate to the drivers of change in the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021. The analysis applied a forward-looking approach to inform corporate perspectives as UN Women transitions towards implementation of its new Strategic Plan.*

## Evidence, data and statistics

 **INSIGHT 1: Interventions focused on building national capabilities to generate and use data are an emerging strength for UN Women at the country-level. While these efforts have not yet been fully consolidated into a defining corporate asset, the new UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021 proposes to address this need. However, more and better evidence is also needed—including evaluative evidence—in respect to working with youth, men and boys, and on South-South cooperation.**

An emerging strength for UN Women at the country level relates to the area of evidence and data. Evaluations found that UN Women is supporting effective strengthening of data and statistics capacity, with evidence

in 2016 focusing particularly at the country level. Country and regional offices are occasionally having to find new ways to undertake research and collect data on sensitive issues, particularly concerning ending violence against women.

Evaluations strongly make the case for data, statistics and evidence as a key pillar of UN Women current and future effectiveness. The ability to aggregate, manipulate and make available this evidence is an important asset that needs to be invested in at the corporate level. However, transitioning current examples into a corporate asset is a challenge that requires both new systems and work on specific technical areas. Evaluations also found that leveraging data and statistics into evidence-based decision-making is a challenging proposition, that takes longer support to ensure sustainability with national institutions. Prioritizing the consolidation, as corporate assets, of systems

to facilitate data gathering, management and analysis will thus help to maximize UN Women's existing and future impact.

Evaluations recognized the potential and progress of work with national bureau of statistics in Pakistan, South Sudan, and Tanzania around gaps in evidence for decision-making about GEEW policies, especially relating to economic empowerment. UN Women in Ethiopia supported national data systems with the integration of an "ending violence against women" module in the current demographic and health national survey. Inclusion of ending violence against women indicators in the Ethiopia demographic and health survey implies that there will be automatic generation of data on these indicators every five years, which are credible and internationally comparable, thereby providing the necessary information and evidence for programming, policy interventions and monitoring of progress in the area.

### Making the case for investment in data

- Two large-scale evaluations examined the intersection between efficiency and the use of evidence and data, both at the global level and from the perspective of whether or not data has been established as a comparative strength.
- Both evaluations made the case for increasing human resource capacity and financial investment in this area due to the potential return-on-investment.
- In the case of the Final Evaluation of the Knowledge Gateway, EmpowerWomen.org, this related to the chance to improve performance and enhance working practices of a specific intervention – the EmpowerWomen.org website.
- The evaluation of the UN Women-Sida Strategic Partnership Framework found that enhanced sex-disaggregated data for evidence-based advocacy is an important element in strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of the flexible Strategic Partnership Framework funding support.

### 3 strategies to increase benefits and sustainability of data and evidence systems

- Translating data and evidence into practical tools for common use relevant to different levels of intervention
- Disseminating evidence across the UN system in addition to within UN Women
- Nurturing champions who pass on their experiences and remain engaged despite the closure of projects or turnover in staffing roles



# Knowledge hub

**INSIGHT 2: UN Women's role as a knowledge hub at the country, regional, and global level is emerging as the centerpiece of its current and future effectiveness in advancing gender equality and empowerment of women.**

The combined evidence from evaluations also indicates how this role can best be realized at each level of the organization:

At the country level, by building multi-stakeholder and inclusive knowledge networks of gender equality expertise and champions supported by applied knowledge and data tools (jointly with other UN entities in low capacity contexts);

At the regional level, by hosting international and thematic knowledge hubs with selected partner institutions, supporting cross-country exchange while remaining grounded in understanding of the context and maintaining relationships of trust with stakeholders; At the corporate level, by building up specialist data and knowledge management capabilities and

systems, and extending the effective use of information and communication technology to reach new, marginalized and vulnerable groups (including young people, rural communities and civil society working in shirking environments).

Thematic and cross-cutting knowledge-hubs appear to be best situated at the regional level, especially where they can be co-hosted with other regional or global institutions. Evaluations confirm that

*“UN Women's role as a knowledge hub is the centerpiece of its expanding effectiveness”*

regional level exchange of knowledge offers the dual benefits of cross-border exchange and contextualization. Regional evaluations, in particular, have highlighted UN Women's relevance and contribution through facilitating knowledge exchange at this level as a complement to global facilitates such as the Knowledge Gateway. The

challenge to this approach is one of sustainability: identifying suitable institutional partners operating at the same level for whom it would be feasible to host the knowledge function over the long term. In some cases, UN Women may need to specifically nurture or even initiate such institutions. Ideally, however, the knowledge function is co-hosted (where possible) with a strategic regional partner from the outset.

Development of knowledge management strategies were recommended in several evaluations, with an emphasis on two key considerations: 1) ensuring that knowledge developed and made accessible is intersectional and responsive to region-specific challenges, and 2) adopting a long-term position of transitioning the knowledge hub function for specific thematic areas to regional institutions. There is also scope for UN Women to generate more and better knowledge—including evaluative evidence—on emerging areas identified as strategic drivers of change, especially youth engagement and South-South (and triangular) cooperation.



SOLAR ENGINEERING TRAINER, BAREFOOT COLLEGE, INDIA

*The portfolio of 2016 evaluations reveal the centrality of knowledge management to UN Women's global and regional effectiveness*

## Alliance building



WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE. PANCHAYAT KANKRADARA, DISTRICT DUNGARPUR, RAJASTHAN.

**INSIGHT 3: Facilitating meaningful relations and dialogue between diverse stakeholders is central to UN Women's effectiveness across all country contexts. Partnerships are the area with greatest potential for enhancing the relevance of UN Women interventions; with a strong case for leveraging recent successes in improving partnership relationships to build greater effectiveness.**

The 2016 portfolio of evaluations reported a significantly improved level of relevance of UN Women's partnerships in terms of positive relationships between partners. Across all contexts, UN Women has been effective in bringing different actors together in a way in which information and experience is shared, relations are built

or strengthened, and commitment is built.

At the policy level, several evaluations found that positive progress had been made in terms of partnerships and alliances to support policy implementation. However, low levels of mandate and goal alignment between institutions remains a challenge to national-level convergence for common action. In terms of service support in low-income and/or emergency countries, many evaluations found contributions of UN Women interventions to sustainability had made reasonable progress in terms of securing the de jure support of key legal frameworks, but UN Women was hampered in meeting its objectives for de facto support of national capacity by limited financing, short time frames, and a need for improved targeting and monitoring mechanisms. Complementing these partnerships with national pools of gender equality expertise was found to be an efficient approach

for UN Women. Particularly in low capacity contexts, this needs to be done jointly with other UN entities.

Overall, successful alliance-building was found to be a long-term endeavor grounded in nurturing social cohesion and local ownership. Using participatory approaches and co-creating interventions also supports the development of local assets that enable sustainable development.

*Successful alliance-building is a long-term endeavor grounded in nurturing national ecosystems of gender equality expertise, social cohesion and political ownership, and local assets for sustainable development.*

## 5

FACTORS  
CRITICAL TO  
EFFECTIVE  
ALLIANCE  
BUILDINGWORKING WITH  
POLITICAL SYSTEMS

on supporting women's participation and leadership in political processes (including with political parties) using approaches that avoid UN Women becoming caught-up in the actual politics and political issues at stake—for example, through platforms to support rapprochement and improved relations among female elected representatives from different political parties

CREATING SPACE  
FOR WOMEN

in existing community platforms by expanding arrangements with non-traditional partners (both governmental and non-governmental) to involve marginalized women as active participants—supporting the building of strong bridging bonds between marginalized groups and mainstream community members

FACILITATING  
MEANINGFUL  
DIALOGUE and

evidence-based policymaking processes among multiple groups of stakeholders (including both duty bearers and rights holders) at multiple levels of intervention to leverage positive outcomes for citizens more broadly

Understanding  
the limitations  
of UN Women

in each context and building on the strengths of earlier programming phases by **ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS IN ALL STAGES** (but especially in the design phase)

ESTABLISHING  
STRONG  
PARTNERSHIPS  
WITH BUSINESSES

to identify and address key gender rights risks and impacts associated with business activities

### Three positive strategies for supporting the sustainability of alliances for GEEW were identified, including:

- Focusing on positive change in peoples' knowledge, attitudes and practices
- Supporting networks across government, civil society, women and communities that enable fluid and systematic dialogue between the different stakeholders
- Adopting consultative and participatory approaches that ensure that partners are not only beneficiaries, but also co-creators and drivers of various initiatives



ADOLESCENT GIRLS FROM A BASKETBALL TEAM IN BRAZIL, 'ONE WIN LEADS TO ANOTHER'



## Innovation and technology



IN JORDAN, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SHOWCASED THEIR GRASP OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES WITH PROJECTS SPANNING RENEWABLE ENERGY AND WATER TO ROBOTICS

**INSIGHT 4:** While evaluative evidence on UN Women digital innovation strategies is not yet available, evaluations do highlight the effectiveness of innovating traditional processes to enhance participation, co-creation and social cohesion. Furthermore, they highlight a need for more evaluation evidence about innovative approaches to working with specific constituencies, especially youth, men & boys.

Several examples of innovation were identified by evaluations across the spectrum of different contexts in which UN Women works. Many

programs were producing innovative approaches, generating valuable experiences and good practices. At the global level, the website EmpowerWomen.org sits at the intersection of technology and innovation. Evaluations found that it has allocated most of its financial resources to implement information technology, communications and outreach activities, as well as research and content development. Over a three-year period, this helped increase the number of registered users by more than 1100 per cent—to a total of 14,437, as of September 2016.

However, country-level evidence suggests that significant scope remains for nurturing innovation in traditional processes (such as policy development) by promoting social cohesion and local ownership. These

aspects were found to be equally important as capacity development, if not more so. Both aspects take time to achieve successfully, and successful examples had to find context-specific ways to overcome institutional or governance barriers.

Analysis of work on adolescents and youth, and men and boys, reveals a small but growing set of evaluative evidence about reaching out to these constituencies. In general,

*“Some evaluations called for increased efforts to reach specific groups via audio-visual tools, social media and the Internet.”*



NEW AFRICAN SOLAR TECHNICIANS,  
EACH READY TO ELECTRIFY HER  
HOME VILLAGE FOR THE FIRST TIME

work with these groups appears to be limited in scope and scale, and most often treated as a cross-cutting consideration rather than benefiting from specifically-designed interventions. At the same time, some evaluations called for increased efforts to reach specific groups via audio-visual, social media and the Internet. Alongside the new digital innovation strategy, both these areas of work require more evidence to inform and assess future innovations. In particular, greater emphasis will be needed in the commissioning of future evaluations to build the evidence base about what are the most relevant innovations in working with these constituencies. This is seen to be a very useful addition to more “traditional” networking where civil society space is shrinking.

### PROCESS INNOVATION

Examples of process innovation in Cambodia and Pakistan were notable for introducing inclusive and democratic consultation with people normally excluded from policy formulation in their contexts. In the case of the second Cambodia National Action Plan for Violence Against Women, UN Women facilitated an extended formulation process that fostered collaboration between government and civil society, built the capacity of rights holders and duty bearers, and included the needs of “women at increased risk”.

**UN Women works to harness digital solutions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all its programmatic activities.**

**This aims to contribute to three strategic areas for women's empowerment:**

#### ENGAGE

Informing and engaging the wider public, including individual women and girls, men and boys, UN Member States, companies and civil society organizations in action towards gender equality

#### LEARN

Providing gender advocates and women and girls as rights holders with learning opportunities

#### CREATE

Creating decent work and facilitating entrepreneurship to provide women with opportunities to earn an income, be more independent and improve their quality of life



# THE META-ANALYSIS APPROACH: Synthetizing evidence

A STAFF NURSE AT THE AGED PERSONS CENTER IN THE VILLAGE OF BOKONBAEVO, KYRGYZSTAN, PROVIDES BASIC MEDIAL DIAGNOSTICS FOR THE ELDERLY PATIENTS WHO VISIT THE CENTER EACH DAY FOR RECREATION AND MEALS.

**The approach of this meta-analysis was consistent with the 2015 UN Women meta-analysis. It consisted of five main stages:**

- 1** Identifying evaluation reports to be included in the analysis using the results of the GERAAS meta-evaluation 2016: Evaluation reports were read and the major findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations were individually extracted into an Excel database, with each statement linked to the evaluation report from which it was extracted and being labelled as a "finding", "conclusion", "recommendation" or "lesson".
- 2** Classifying each insight from a report according to dimensions provided by the UN Evaluation Group evaluation criteria. Statements were synthesized and coded in Excel.
- 3** Undertaking a qualitative analysis of the main issues after clustering statements under each classification. Where appropriate, an indication of the frequency of insights was given.
- 4** Undertaking a quantitative assessment in Excel that analysed the frequency with which evaluation findings referred to positive or negative performance in relation to various aspects of development effectiveness specified by OECD-DAC.
- 5** Conducting a final qualitative analysis of high-level drivers of UN Women's performance, areas of innovation and examples of positive practice.

**The meta-analysis used a process of "realist synthesis" that builds on similar analyses undertaken in 2013 and 2015. A "realist synthesis" distills all relevant existing evidence to draw out relevant programmatic and operational evidence.**

## THE SCOPE OF THE META-ANALYSIS INCLUDED

**36** Corporate & decentralized evaluation reports produced by UN Women in 2016.

**52** Countries with program presence;

**Project and program evaluations continue to dominate the overall portfolio, although 2016 included**

**2** corporate

**3** global

**7** multi-country evaluations

**There were also**

**3** country portfolio evaluations

**12** countries with program presence were included in evaluations in 2016 that were not previously covered.



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