# UN WOMEN

# TRANSFORM

## What do the evaluations tell us?

# Dear Readers,

As part of UN Women's continuous focus on promoting learning and knowledge management, the Independent Evaluation Service undertakes an annual meta-analysis of evaluations. The main purpose of the meta-analysis is to maximize the influence and use of evaluative evidence by providing the synthesis of corporate and decentralized evaluations for learning, accountability and improved programming. This approach has helped to broaden and deepen understanding of the performance of UN Women across its impact areas, as well as its organizational effectiveness and efficiency results, over the years.

This year's annual meta-analysis is the final report covering the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 cycle. It synthesized information from 39 evaluations and provided a consolidated assessment of the development effectiveness and efficiency results of UN Women. The analysis also provided insights on the drivers of change and contributions made by UN Women to humanitarian response. It serves as part of the knowledge base for how to implement the subsequent Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

I hope the insights and lessons captured in the analysis helps UN Women and its partners to gain a deeper understanding of UN Women's results and the drivers of change that facilitate or hinder performance in order to maximize programming impact and effectiveness in the future.

**Inga Sniukaite**
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*Think Beyond.*
*Stay Ahead.*

# A meta-analysis of UN Women evaluations in 2017

## Meta-analysis: Reflections on results, lessons and drivers of change

## Analysis and synthesis for insight

FINDINGS

## What do the evaluations tell us?

THE POWER OF INTEGRATION, COORDINATION, AND PARTNERSHIPS

## What boosts UN Women's work?

OVERARCHING CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Moving from meta-analysis to action

## The meta-analysis methodology: Synthesizing evidence

**ON THE COVER** Nguyen Thi Thu, is a 24-year-old migrant worker from Ha Tinh, Vietnam, she works at a special farm in Cameron Highlands, Friday 1 December 2017.

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INDONESIA - SAFE CITIES -
PREVENTING VIOLENCE
AT A NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL.

# Reflections on results, lessons and drivers of change

UN Women's Independent Evaluation Service conducts evaluations to demonstrate accountability in managing results for UN Women and its governing bodies, provide credible and reliable evidence for decision-making, and contribute important lessons in the knowledge base of UN Women. In this respect, UN Women, as an organization focused on building knowledge and facilitating learning, continuously seeks methods that drive the realization of its strategic priorities as outlined in its latest Strategic Plan 2018-2021. One such method is through the meta-analysis of its evaluations, which provides a comprehensive perspective on organizational progress, which is critical to understanding what can be done in the future to support gender equality and the empowerment of women.

By looking across a wide range of evaluations to identify common themes from the findings, conclusions, and lessons learned, this year's meta-analysis synthesized information from 39 evaluations to respond to selected operational effectiveness and efficiency results identified in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and examined contributions made by UN Women to humanitarian response.

The analysis provided several important insights and recommendations that merit close attention. Overall, the analysis concluded that UN Women interventions were relevant, efficient, and effective, with most achieving the expected results. Similarly, the UN Women integrated mandate was found by many evaluations to be a key factor in supporting the participation of a broad group of stakeholders in national institutional processes. The analysis also showed that UN Women comparative strengths are most pronounced in alliance and network building, leveraging the integrated mandate, and working with partners.

Network building is a key driver of UN Women contributions to impact – especially when linked to strategic partnerships and formal collaboration. Using such approaches, UN Women is overcoming barriers to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, despite reliance on short-term non-core resources that are poorly suited to gender transformative programming. Given

*"The UN Women integrated mandate was found by many evaluations to be a key factor in supporting the participation of a broad group of stakeholders in national institutional processes"*

the short timeframe of many interventions, drawing on local capacities for implementation and supporting the development of informal networks contributed to sustainability.

Nonetheless, securing multi-year funding, scaling-up of high impact innovative approaches, and strengthening results-based management systems that go beyond capturing immediate outputs to tracking outcomes needs to be further expanded and improved. It also highlighted the importance of strengthening knowledge management and exchange to better report evidence of progress over the long-term and ensure knowledge is translated into results. Effective UN coordination, joint programming, and strategic partnerships are also among the key drivers of change found to be instrumental in further boosting UN Women's achievements. The analysis in particular suggested the need for strengthening the results-based management systems to support adaptive programme management and use evidence of progress towards outcomes to advocate for long-term and more stable core resources for UN Women to scale and accelerate successful interventions.

We hope the synthesis is useful for further reflection and translates into learning that informs future thinking and practices to drive transformative change on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

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

UN WOMEN

# Analysis and synthesis for insight

VERONICA CASIMIRA, MENTOR TO EIGHT SELF-HELP GROUPS IN THE BOBONARO REGION, AND PROUD OWNER OF LIVESTOCK IN MEMO VILLAGE, TIMOR-LESTE.

**The Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System is used to strengthen the quality and use of evaluation at UN Women. The System produces a meta-evaluation which rates the quality of each evaluation report and a meta-analysis which synthesizes key findings, conclusions and recommendations of highly rated evaluation reports. The System uses the UN Evaluation Group evaluation report standards, plus specific standards relevant to UN Women.**

## Analysis

## 39 EVALUATIONS    34 COUNTRIES
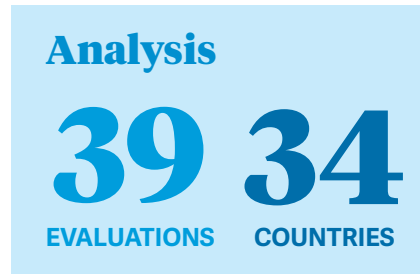
The purpose of this meta-analysis is to aggregate and synthesize information generated from evaluations conducted in 2017 and transform it into accessible knowledge for future systematic strengthening of programming, organizational effectiveness and the evaluation function. This new knowledge is intended to help inform the implementation of the new UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

The meta-analysis is based on 39 evaluation reports independently rated as satisfactory or above according to UN Evaluation Group quality standards. It uses a process of realist synthesis to distill all relevant existing evidence and draw out relevant

programmatic and operational evidence. In addition to qualitative analysis of evaluation findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons, the meta-analysis applies a quantitative assessment of development effectiveness based

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

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

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on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee's methods for evaluating multilateral organizations.

Looking through the lens of the UN Evaluation Group and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee's evaluation criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability), this meta-analysis responds to selected operational effectiveness and efficiency results identified in the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021, and also examines contributions made by UN Women to humanitarian response.

UN WOMEN, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE UN OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY HOSTS
A FOUR-DAY SIMULATION LAB FROM
JANUARY 29 TO FEBRUARY 1, 2018 AT THE
UN WOMEN NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS.

# What do the evaluations tell us?

*The meta-analysis finds continuing improvement in UN Women overall development effectiveness. The evaluations concluded that overall UN Women interventions were relevant, efficient, and effective, with most achieving the expected results across all thematic areas. The combination of UN Women convening power, partnerships and the integrated mandate contributed to achieving positive outcomes.*

TO MAXIMIZE HER RESOURCES AS WELL AS THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF HER ENTERPRISE, MADAME GARIKO HAS INTEGRATED HER FAMILY INTO THE BUSINESS. HER SON, WHO IS A UNIVERSITY STUDENT, SUPPORTS THE PROJECT AND CONDUCTS A MILK COLLECTION TWICE A DAY.

UN Women's comparative strengths are most pronounced in alliance and network-building, leveraging the integrated mandate, and convening partners. UN Women used these approaches to overcome predominantly-hindering external environments, including reliance on short-term non-core resources that are often poorly suited to gender-transformative programming. Despite limited evidence of explicit exit-planning in UN Women interventions, many findings on sustainability indicate the benefits of interventions are likely to continue due to development of national and local institutional capacity.

Although improved results-based management systems are in place, theories of change and monitoring indicators emphasized activities and outputs, relative to

## UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017 Thematic Areas:

**1** Women's leadership and political participation

**2** Women economic empowerment

**3** Ending violence against women

**4** Peace, security and humanitarian action

**5** National planning and budgeting

**6** Global norms, policies and standards

outcomes. UN Women's reliance on non-core funds with a relatively short time-span also adversely impacts the ability to measure and capture changes at the outcome or impact level. Funding constraints also were manifested in insufficient numbers of key staff positions (country-level senior staff, monitoring experts, and gender-mainstreaming advisors in humanitarian settings) to fully deliver on the Strategic Plan and country Strategic Notes.

Notwithstanding the limitations for making comparisons between the percentage of satisfactory ratings each year and without precluding the possibility of further improvement, the overall trend does indicate positive improvements across all development effectiveness criteria.

# FINDINGS

## Development Effectiveness

**SATISFACTORY RATINGS (%)** [1]

**97%** Relevance

**86%** Effectiveness

**74%** Sustainability

**81%** Efficiency

**75%** Culture of results

[1] *The Satisfactory Ratings (%) were based on the percentage of evaluations that reported positive findings about UN Women's performance*

## RELEVANCE

| Relevance | 97% |
|---|---|
| **CRITERIA AND 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. | **100%** |

**Evaluations found UN Women interventions were highly relevant to normative frameworks, successful at meeting the needs of women at the national level and demonstrating good adaptive capacity. Although UN Women projects were well-designed, most evaluations found the need for more intensive situation analyses.**
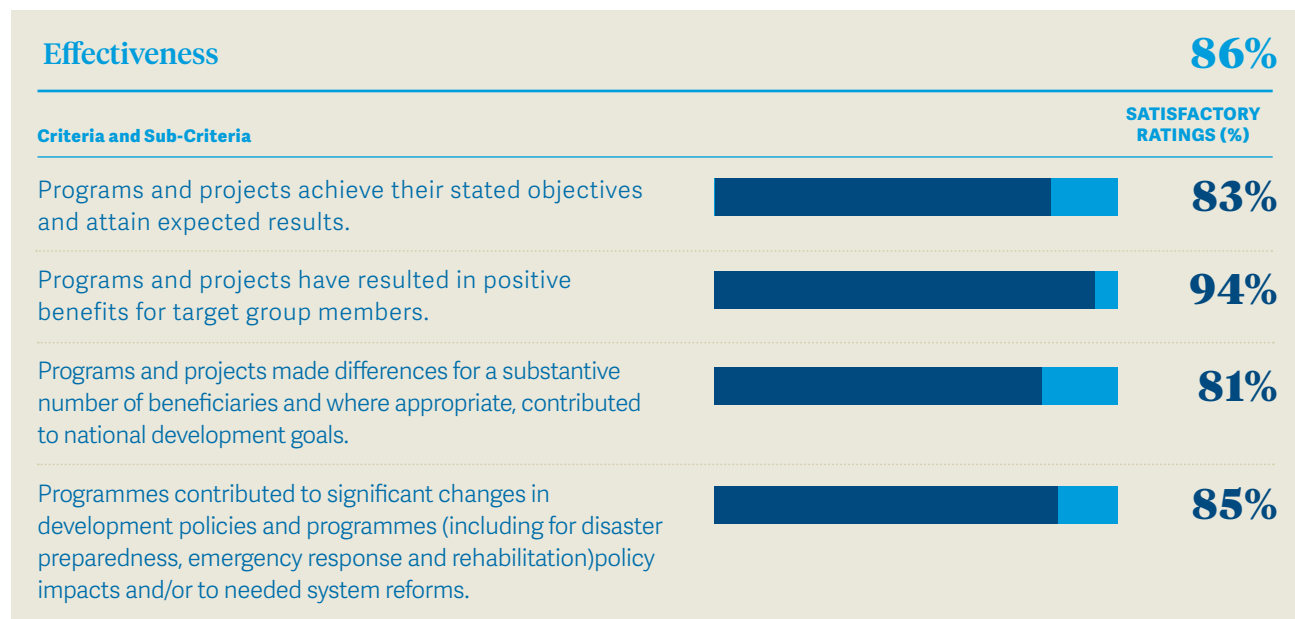
Most evaluations provided clear evidence that UN Women interventions firmly aligned with intergovernmental global and regional norms on gender, and national gender policies, strategies and programmes. For the first time, several evaluations in 2017 assessed the alignment of UN Women programming at the country-level with the UN Women Flagship Programme Initiatives, and all found efforts to operationalise the flagship programmes.

There was mixed evidence on the prevalence of situation assessments and surveys of needs, with regional differences in performance. There was more evidence of assessments being conducted at global, regional and national levels, with evaluations finding a significant gap in assessments of need at the community level. An issue covered by some evaluations in 2017 was the added value of 'global' or 'regional' programmes being implemented in several countries. Aside from resources and limited numbers of learning exchanges, these evaluations found limited value is being added by 'multi-country' programme structures beyond the learning and exchange which is already supported by the day-to-day work of regional advisors. Future global and regional programmes can do more to support shared approaches, knowledge management systems, and an enabling environment rather than simply replacing or duplicating country-level project administration functions.

## EFFECTIVENESS

| Effectiveness | 86% |
|---|---|
| **Criteria and Sub-Criteria** | **SATISFACTORY RATINGS (%)** |
| Programs and projects achieve their stated objectives and attain expected results. | 83% |
| Programs and projects have resulted in positive benefits for target group members. | 94% |
| Programs and projects made differences for a substantive number of beneficiaries and where appropriate, contributed to national development goals. | 81% |
| Programmes contributed to significant changes in development policies and programmes (including for disaster preparedness, emergency response and rehabilitation)policy impacts and/or to needed system reforms. | 85% |

**UN Women evaluations found that interventions at all levels have been effective, with most achieving the expected results across all thematic areas with limited resources. Strategic partnerships, UN joint programming and openness to innovation have contributed to some of the most effective interventions.**

Many evaluations found UN Women programming demonstrated good adaptive capacity and enhanced participation of women in development. Evaluations showed many examples of UN Women interventions successfully contributing to strengthening the capacities of actors, formulating gender-sensitive policies and addressing multiple levels (e.g. policy, institutional, community).

Thematically, evaluations observed that policy implementation remains a challenge for political representation

*Evaluations concluded that violence against women is one of the hardest outcomes to measure the contribution of interventions, but integrated service provision offered firm evidence of effectiveness.*

of women. A few evaluations noted gender-responsive budgeting was successfully supported, but evidence that this led to changes in expenditure, accountability and impact was limited. Regarding women's economic empowerment, several evaluations concluded that UN Women's



A VILLAGE COUNCIL HEAD FROM A VILLAGE IN ALWAR DISTRICT OF RAJASTHAN IN INDIA ATTENDS A MEETING ORGANIZED BY UN WOMEN'S PARTNER THE HUNGER PROJECT, TO DEVELOP HER LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

contribution to results was effective. There was a range in how holistic economic empowerment programming was and a few evaluations recommended more integrated approaches.

Several evaluations identified the use of service-provision models for access to social welfare, justice expertise, or business development support by country offices. These models had good reach, but mixed success in scalability within national systems and structures. Overall, evaluations concluded that violence against women is one of the hardest outcomes to measure the contribution of interventions, but integrated service provision (safe spaces, one stop shops) offered firm

## The five most common strategies for change found under analyses of effectiveness

**Capacity development of national institutions and CSOs**

**Advocacy and coordination**

**MOST COMMON STRATEGIES FOR CREATING CHANGE**

**Working in strategic partnerships**

**Creating model services for scaling-up**

**Supporting gender data**

evidence of effectiveness. Knowledge products generated by UN Women are considered key inputs for national and state counterparts to accelerate the harmonization of state legal frameworks with the international and national standards on ending violence against women.

Several evaluations concluded that UN Women programming helped prioritise the commitment to intergovernmental gender equality norms at the country-level and helped extend the reach of UN-system programming to marginalised groups. They also observed that the focus on women's participation was as beneficiaries of programming, rather than as decision-makers within programmatic structures.

Several explanatory factors influenced the performance of the interventions, as summarized below.

Overall, evaluations showed a strong performance on effectiveness, with the most positive performance being concrete benefits to members of targeted groups.

**ENABLING FACTORS**

DIVERSE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

JOINT PROGRAMMES

BUILDING ON PAST WORK

OPENNESS TO INNOVATION

CUSTOMISED SUPPORT TO PARTNERS

**INFLUENCING FACTORS**

STAFF RETENTION AND INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

OVERALL AID PRESENCE

TIMING OF INTERVENTIONS

APPROACH AND ENGAGEMENT OF DONOR
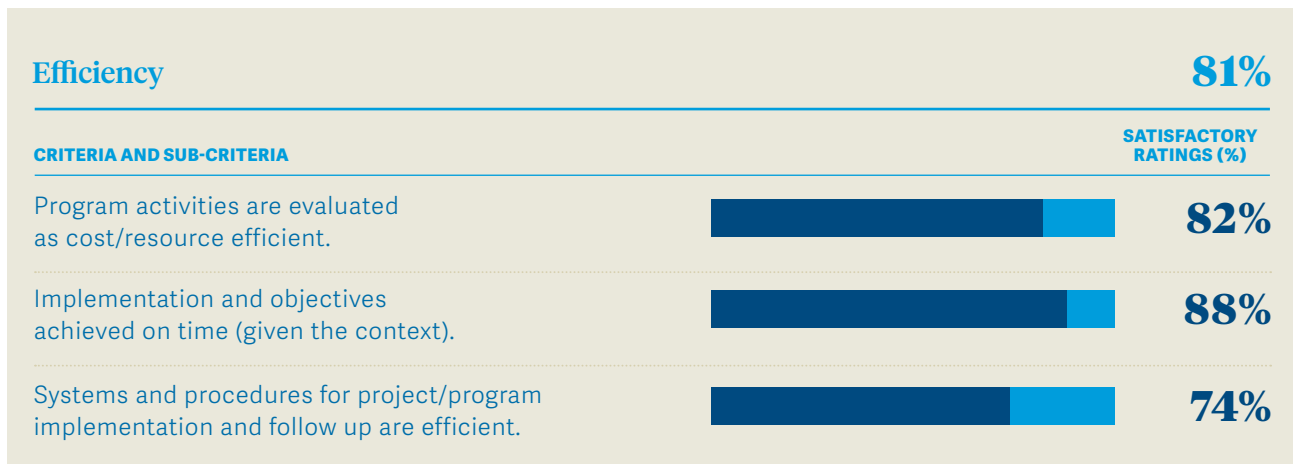
NATIONAL DEVOLUTION AGENDA

RELIGIOUS LEADERS

**HINDERING FACTORS**

SECURITY SITUATION

ADMINISTRATIVE TIME PRESSURES

BUDGET DEFICITS

HOSTILE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENTS

UNREALISTIC OR FIXED LOGFRAMES

## EFFICIENCY

| Efficiency | 81% |
|---|---|
| **CRITERIA AND SUB-CRITERIA** | **SATISFACTORY RATINGS (%)** |
| Program activities are evaluated as cost/resource efficient. | **82%** |
| Implementation and objectives achieved on time (given the context). | **88%** |
| Systems and procedures for project/program implementation and follow up are efficient. | **74%** |

**Evaluations found solid positive performance in terms of the efficiency of implementation, management arrangements, and financial planning. However, integration of monitoring, financial and reporting systems could be improved to fully support real-time programme management and effective partnership governance.**

### REGIONAL EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN CONTRIBUTION TO GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Based on the overall budget for the Regional Project, it cost an average of US$24,000 per municipality or national programme to instigate gender-responsive budgeting. This has the potential to influence at least US$235 million per year in expenditure. In Albania, an additional US$61 million was leveraged specifically to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women policy: this alone represents a return on investment for the entire regional project of US$26.40 for each US$1 spent.

Evaluations concluded that overall UN Women interventions were balanced and cost-effective, and delivered on most of the intended objectives. Several evaluations noted recent improvements in UN Women business processes, such as calls for proposals, contracting processes, and partnership durations. Other evaluations

*There is a need for a comprehensive approach to risk analysis and management in UN Women programming.*

noted increased transparency in operations, efficiency in recruitment, and manageability of business systems and management overheads. Overall, evaluations found that UN Women offices managed limited financial and human resources responsively.

Evaluations also concluded that resources were generally insufficient to scale or sustain interventions beyond the project timeframe. Compressed project timescales was also a concern in evaluations. This links to the observation in a few evaluations that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to risk analysis and management in UN Women programming.

Many evaluations noted that country offices were increasing local

fundraising efforts, driven by goals set by Headquarters. This is having mixed success, but a few evaluations found that securing multi-year donor funds to the country Strategic Note (rather than to individual projects) made a significant contribution to both management and programmatic efficiency.



PROUD VOTERS IN THE 7 JULY 2012 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN TIMOR-LESTE.

UN WOMEN/BETSY DAVIS COSME

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ALYAMI, MOHAMMED
AMER, AWNY
BAMBERGER, MICHAEL
BARQAWI, MARAM
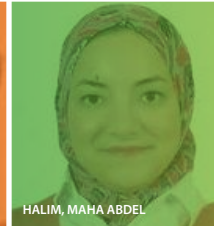CARDEN, FRED
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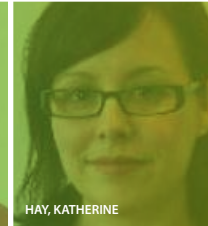DONALDSON, STEWART I
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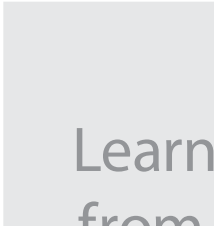FAÚNDEZ, ALEJANDRA
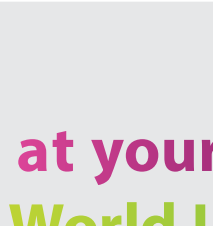FETTERMAN, DAVID
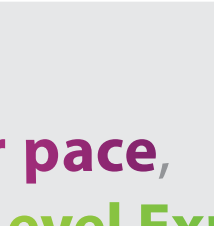FONT, LEOPOLDO
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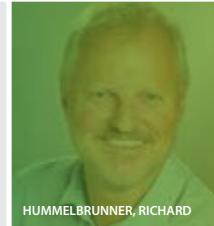HAY, KATHERINE

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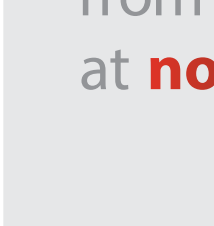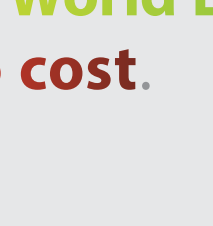LUNDGREN, HANS

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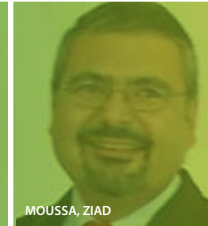NAIDOO, INDRAN
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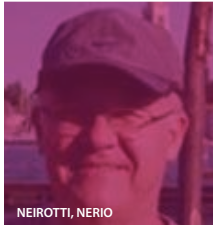
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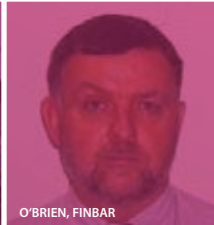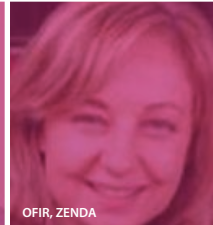
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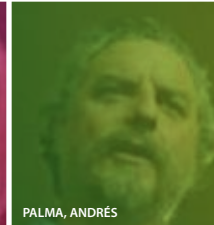
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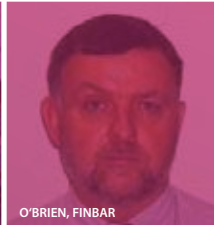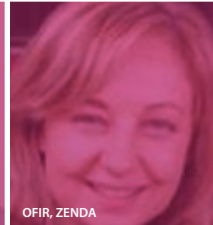
MARTINIC, SERGIO VALENCIA
MATHIA, MARIANE
KOSHELEVA, NATALIA
KUMAR, SHIVA
KUSEK ZALL, JODY
KUZMIN, ALEXEY
MENON, SARASWATHI

## CULTURE OF RESULTS

| Criteria and Sub-Criteria | | 75% |
|---|---|---|
| **SUB-CRITERIA** | | **SATISFACTORY RATINGS (%)** |
| Systems and processes for monitoring and reporting on program results are effective. | | **75%** |
| Results-based management systems are effective. | | **75%** |

**Most evaluations found that results-based management systems are in place, and have improved, but require continuous investment and further strengthening.**

Evaluations found continual improvement in results-based management systems over the course of Strategic Plan 2014-2017. In 2017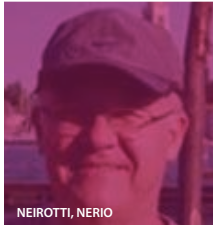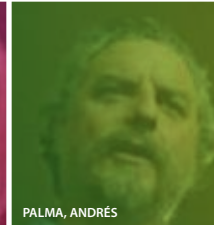, 75 per cent of evaluations concluded that systems for managing, monitoring and reporting on results were in place and functioning, the highest level achieved to date. At the same time, this provides only a partial picture with the qualitative analysis of evaluation findings revealing weaknesses in results-based management that require organisation-wide attention. This improvement should be viewed in more nuanced terms – to avoid a tendency for compliance-based implementation of results-based management and to better support the examination of outcomes.

There is a measurement challenge to assessing the impact on gender equality that does not fit well with the way (level and timeframe) that UN Women is funded. A dissonance between large-scale problems and

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 2016 – JAMAICA.

UN WOMEN/KHRISTINA GODFREY

*A dissonance between large-scale problems and small-scale projects means that the impact of UN Women programming is gradual and difficult to reliably detect without consistent long-term tracking.*

small-scale projects means that the impact of UN Women programming is gradual and difficult to reliably detect without consistent long-term tracking. Constraints on monitoring and reporting specialists at the country level and the capacity of partners to report on outcomes and impact results is an area of concern reflected in several evaluations.

## SUSTAINABILITY
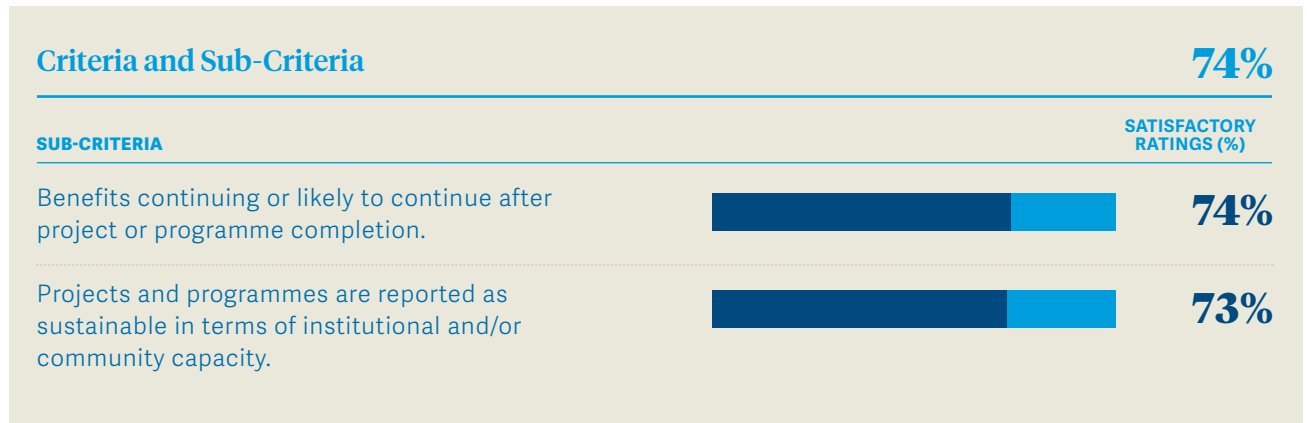
| Criteria and Sub-Criteria | | **74%** |
|---|---|---|
| **SUB-CRITERIA** | | **SATISFACTORY RATINGS (%)** |
| Benefits continuing or likely to continue after project or programme completion. | | **74%** |
| Projects and programmes are reported as sustainable in terms of institutional and/or community capacity. | | **73%** |

**Despite limited evidence of explicit exit-planning in UN Women interventions, many findings on sustainability indicated that the benefits of interventions were likely to continue after programming ended due to consistent development of national and local institutional capacity.**

Many evaluations found capacity development of the national gender equality mechanisms (especially women's ministries) is a common and useful part of UN Women programmes. An institutional approach was associated with good results for the management and monitoring capacities of ministries of women but had mixed results regarding outcomes of national coordination mechanisms for gender equality. Although legal and policy frameworks were often used to support sustainability, many evaluations found a gap in measuring national capacity (usually of the gender equality mechanism) to implement the normative framework.

Training was a common approach to capacity development, although it had low levels of sustainability without continuous follow-up, including coaching. A few evaluations concluded that institutional gender audits or efforts to increase the representation of women in leadership positions were more sustainable approaches to capacity.

A few evaluations observed that 'scaling' models were included in project design as a pathway to sustainability, but that no evidence was available to suggest that this was a feasible objective or likely outcome. The main strategy for sustainability was programmes working through national structures and institutions. Many evaluations rated this approach highly.

*A few evaluations concluded that institutional gender audits or efforts to increase the representation of women in leadership positions were more sustainable approaches to capacity.*

Although capacity development adds significant value, a more coherent corporate framework for the UN Women approach to capacity development is needed.

KENYA

### INTEGRATING GENDER IN PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

The final project evaluation notes that one of the successes of the project relates to follow-on actions taken by women trained in Marsabit. Following engagement by government and civil society organisations within their counties and completion of the leadership course, these women formed a local organization – Advancement of Women in Peace and Security in Africa – that is already receiving funding for countering violent extremism from a donor.

ISABELLA HOUAREAU IS THE MANAGING
DIRECTOR OF SOCOMEP, AN ENTERPRISE THAT
PROVIDES SERVICES FOR THE SEYCHELLES'
LARGEST INDUSTRY – INDUSTRIAL TUNA FISHING.

THE POWER OF INTEGRATION, COORDINATION, AND PARTNERSHIPS

# What boosts UN Women's work?

*This section presents insights and lessons UN Women can leverage with respect to organizational effectiveness and efficiency results from the new Strategic Plan 2018-2021.*

# ⬚ UN coordination and joint programmes

Many evaluations found that the most significant external driver of performance was the integration of UN Women interventions with the UN system, especially at the country-level. A few evaluations found that country-level UN Joint Programmes helped address some of the resource gaps UN Women faced, concluding that the Joint Programme structure created an 'enabling environment' for gender equality and women's empowerment. Joint programming with the UN system was generally good, but joint implementation was weak.

Where joint implementation was achieved, programmes were more efficient because they leveraged UN structures. Evaluations of humanitarian action found that economic empowerment is a potential niche for UN Women, and link this to wider UN programming under the cluster system.

Joint UN work made powerful contributions to cross-border and interdisciplinary programming, upstream sensitisation, and securing women's legal rights within larger policy frameworks.

# 3

**CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED TO FULLY LEVERAGING UN COORDINATION AS A POSITIVE DRIVER OF CHANGE:**

**SHIFTING from 'planning-as-one' to implementation-level 'delivery-as-one.'**

**ESTABLISHING shared UN-macro frameworks/ narratives to support interventions.**

**ADDRESSING the disconnect across the humanitarian-development continuum.**

LEBANON - WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS, WORKERS AND SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS - NAJWA KRISHK MORTADA CO-OWNS A WHEAT PROCESSING SHOP WITH HER HUSBAND.

# ⅄ Strategic partnerships and gender mainstreaming



UN WOMEN/JOE SAADE

Most evaluations found that partnerships enabled significant results for gender equality at the global, regional and country level. In particular, partnerships enabled multisector work and the network of civil society organisations. Evaluations at the country level highlighted the importance of convening power, while global evaluations highlighted the importance of the integrated mandate held by UN Women.

UN Women needs to better develop strategic entry points due to highly constrained resource availability. The Strategic Plan 2014-2017 was a period of exploration and consolidation of different partnership approaches. The Strategic Plan 2018-2021 is an opportunity to bring these evolving approaches together.

Several evaluations found partnerships to be the key determinant of engagement levels with youth, especially when working with young men as partners for change. The structural engagement of youth to support behaviour change relied on a combination of innovation in UN Women programming with reach, operational capacity, and partner sustainability. Overall, partnership effectiveness

improved when sufficient time was allocated to inception phases for partners to learn how to work jointly in practice.

Partnerships at the national and local levels were a key strategy for most projects and programmes. Most evaluations concluded that local capacities for implementation

*The structural engagement of youth to support behaviour change relied on a combination of innovation in UN Women programming with reach, operational capacity, and partner sustainability.*

contributed to sustainability. A key attribute of sustainability was supporting the development of informal networks. This was especially the case for women's economic empowerment where community income generation led to the financial independence of women and development of joint-venture companies.

## EVALUATION OF THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME: WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND INTEGRATION INTO THE VALUE CHAIN OF THE COCA-COLA

One of the first steps in developing this partnership was to take the time to understand: "Where each one came from and what each one meant by empowerment of women." There was a strong commitment at the top level from both organizations to make the partnership and the programme work. During the evaluation, most stakeholders reported that they saw this as an innovative public-private partnership programme.

UN Women IES Guidance Series

INCLUSIVE SYSTEMIC EVALUATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY, ENVIRONMENTS AND MARGINALIZED VOICES (ISE4GEMs):
A new approach for the SDG era.

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# ISE4GEMs approach:

BRINGING TOGETHER
INNOVATIVE SYSTEMIC EVALUATION PRACTICE
WITH INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS

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# Performance and adaptation in humanitarian and security situations

For 2017, eleven (28 per cent) evaluations covered humanitarian action, including country portfolio evaluations, country-level project evaluations, and a regional evaluation on humanitarian action in Arab States. Findings on humanitarian action were framed by the context that UN Women is not yet a member of the International Agency Standing Committee, which governs the humanitarian cluster system (while UN Refugee Agency governs refugee response).

UN Women's efforts to become a member of the International Agency Standing Committee have so far been unsuccessful, which limits opportunities to leverage its mandate through the International Agency Standing Committee clusters. Addressing the varying degrees of in-country technical expertise is also important for UN Women to enhance its position as an influencer in humanitarian infrastructure.

Within the current context, partnerships have been a key driver of UN Women contributions to humanitarian outcomes and peacebuilding. UN Women has been able to effectively contribute to gender mainstreaming in the humanitarian response in countries such as Malawi and Cameroon. Several evaluations recommended that UN Women focus on supporting the uptake of the International Agency Standing Committee gender markers across all humanitarian projects.

The Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Crisis Response Flagship Programme has been a useful framework for supporting

## Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Crisis Response Flagship Programme

The Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Crisis Response Flagship Programme improves gender responsiveness of coordinated humanitarian action by:

- Ensuring humanitarian planning and programming are informed by gender analysis and assessment.
- Increasing access to protection and economic opportunities for women affected by crises.
- Bridging the humanitarian/development divide in protracted crises by promoting sustainable livelihoods.

*Women's economic empowerment was found to be the strongest humanitarian programming area regarding quality, reach, contextual adaptations and results.*

UN Women effectiveness, but there is a gap in terms of a more holistic overall global framework for gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action to which UN Women could contribute in the future.

Women's economic empowerment was found to be the strongest humanitarian programming area regarding quality, reach, contextual adaptations and results. UN Women's strength in economic empowerment and legal assistance for survivors of violence as part of a holistic set of response services (with clinical and psychosocial response led by UN Population Fund, and protection by UN Refugee Agency) is a potential area for scaling-up. This

entire integrated response needs to be linked to advocacy – an area where UN Women has established strengths and can most effectively draw on its broader integrated mandate

UN Women has been successful in operating in rural and insecure conditions, despite the high costs and low level of donor presence (to validate and finance projects) associated with these operations. The short timeframe of humanitarian projects (up to one year) were universally found to be a barrier to humanitarian performance, and a few evaluations recommended UN Women more strongly engage with donors and partners to secure multi-year resource commitments, especially in protracted crises.

NAMGAY PELDON, AGED 28, IS THE GUP OF TASHIDING GEWOG LOCATED IN DAGANA DZONGKHAG OF BHUTAN. SHE CURRENTLY STANDS AS THE ONLY FEMALE GUP OR ELECTED LEADER IN BHUTAN.

# 4

## PRIORITY ISSUES TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN EVALUATIONS

Ensuring that **FOCUS** on humanitarian delivery and effectiveness does not adversely affect the performance of other longer-term development programming, especially in countries such as Sudan where the emergency is restricted to a specific area of the country

The need for more staff with **COMPETENCIES** in humanitarian response and coordination, to complement technical expertise in gender

Addressing the gap in multi-stakeholder learning exchanges at the regional level to support better **RESPONSE** to unique regional patterns in emergencies

Shifting humanitarian project **MONITORING** away from a strong focus on project activities, to capture changes at output and outcome levels across multiple project cycles

# ACCOUNTABILITY
## IS
### LEARNING

**GATE System:**
**The Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use**

An on-line based Public Information Management System, which facilitates
UN Women's effort to strategically plan and effectively use evaluations
for accountability, management for results, and knowledge management.

>>>> **http://gate.unwomen.org/**

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FROM DRAWING CONCLUSIONS TO MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

# Moving from meta-analysis to action

*The following conclusions and recommendations have been developed by independent analysis of the findings, based on cross-referencing the findings, lessons, and insights.*

GUATEMALA - BEEKEEPER
AND ENTREPRENEUR
ORALIA RUANO LIMA.

UN WOMEN/ROSENDO QUINTOS

# DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS

CONCLUSION 1: Despite constrained human and financial resources, evaluations found that UN Women's interventions at all levels have been effective, with most achieving the expected results. Nonetheless, UN Women should continue to improve its efforts in achieving resource targets and refine methods and systems to track and capture outcomes and impacts.

Strong levels of evaluation evidence affirm the continuing improvement in UN Women's overall development effectiveness. Despite reliance on short-term non-core resources, UN Women interventions were effective overall. The combination of UN Women convening power, partnerships and the integrated mandate contributes to achieving positive outcomes, but current monitoring systems have limitations in capturing these pathways to outcomes.

There was a substantial improvement in the roll-out of results-based management systems during the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. Evaluations noted scope for improvements, however, particularly in relation to systematic methods and tools for tracking and verifying indicators of progress at outcome and impact levels. Gaps were also found in the capacity to use evidence and data to provide timely feedback or analysis for decision-making and learning.

The outcomes of UN Women programming are gradual and hard



ONE OF THE RURAL LEADERS FILLING OUT THE NATIONAL ID REGISTRATION SHEET FOR A 45-YEARS OLD WOMAN DURING A VISIT IN QUALYOUBIA, EGYPT.

UN WOMEN/ SALLY ZOHNEY

to reliably detect without consistent long-term tracking. Increasing reliance on non-core funds (with low levels of predictability) affects the extent to which the entity can engage in the long-term programming, partnerships, and outcome monitoring that is needed to deliver results.

The lack of predictable funds also were manifested in insufficient numbers of key staff positions to fully deliver on the Strategic Plan and country Strategic Notes, especially country-level senior staff, monitoring experts, and gender-mainstreaming advisors in humanitarian settings. Despite short programmes and limited evidence of explicit exit-planning in UN Women interventions, many findings on sustainability indicated the benefits of interventions were likely to continue due to consistent development of national and local institutional capacity.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Strengthen results-based management systems to support adaptive programme management with information on the progress of interventions along the pathways to outcomes that have been articulated in theories of change. Use evidence of progress towards outcomes to advocate for longer-term and more stable core resources to scale and accelerate successful interventions.

Continue to improve results-based management systems, but with a stronger focus on monitoring and reporting pathways to outcomes (instead of compliance with activity plans). Where feasible, link this results data with financial data to help managers and partners track which interventions and partnerships are translating resources into outcomes most effectively.

CONCLUSION 2: Knowledge management is reliant on the role of regional offices to connect country-level practitioners and ensure knowledge is translated into results.

The extent to which global evidence and programming approaches are 'adapted' to a specific region was found to be an important internal driver of UN Women performance. 'Regionality' contributes best when it is manifested in regionalised approaches, knowledge exchange and creating an 'enabling environment,' rather than replacing or duplicating country-level project administration functions. Support to technical exchanges between people from different countries or communities was found to be especially valued where professionals could learn from neighbouring countries, or places they felt shared similar attributes to their own situations.

**ACHIEVE THIS BY:**

Enabling managers in the field to more easily cross-query corporate results tracking systems with corporate finance systems to identify projects and partnerships that are most cost-effective or are underdelivering.

Linking all partners into common reporting systems to enable quicker aggregation and comparison of monitoring data.

Reducing the number of data points collected on implementation of activities and redirect this effort to tracking evidenced-based key performance indicators along the theory of change to outcome-level changes.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Reduce duplication of country-level programme management functions within regional programmes, directing this capacity to support the enabling environment for participating countries. In particular, strengthen the knowledge exchange function of regional offices, including with human capital for translation of knowledge resources into regional languages

Attempt to avoid regional (and global) programmes that require separate programme management functions to the capacities already available within participating country and multi-country offices. In doing so, progressively make the case for shared resources in regional programmes to be made available to support knowledge exchange and inter-country learning.

## ACHIEVE THIS BY:

Minimising additional reporting requirements (logframe indicators) of regional and global programmes beyond those already collected and reported by countries.

Including within the budget for global and regional programmes resources for dedicated knowledge management positions, meaningful levels of knowledge exchange activities between participating countries, and systematic translation of knowledge materials to accessible languages.

# OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

CONCLUSION 3: Effective UN coordination and joint programmes have been a strong driver of effective programming at the global and country levels.

Country-level UN Joint Programmes have helped to address some of the gaps faced by UN Women resourcing challenges and create an 'enabling environment' for gender equality and women's empowerment. They have enabled UN Women to maximise comparative strengths and mitigate weaknesses, have made powerful contributions to cross-border and interdisciplinary programming, and secured the legal rights of women within larger policy frameworks. However, Joint Programmes are more often 'joint' in planning than they are in implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Realising the potential of UN reform to support gender equality and women's empowerment requires building on 'planning-as-one' to achieve implementation-level 'delivery-as-one'.

In some cases, such as economic empowerment and gender responsive budgeting, supporting implementation-as-one requires shared UN-macro frameworks/narratives to support interventions and counteract regressive discourse. In many cases, the shared frameworks already exist, and UN Women can leverage the integrated mandate to work hand-in-hand with other entities.

CONCLUSION 4: Strategic partnerships have delivered substantive normative and operational results for UN Women, and are the heart of programme sustainability.

Partnerships have been a significant enabler of results for gender equality at the global, regional and country levels. In particular, partnerships have supported multisector working, and the network of civil society organisations to which UN Women has access is considered to be a firm comparative strength. Many lessons have been learned about improving the governance of UN Women partnerships, including that they need to be implemented more broadly and more consistently.

Key lessons to guide the improvement of partnership governance include: initiate governance arrangements during the design stage of partnerships to 'hit-the-ground-running' and stress-test assumptions about working together; use the inception phase to develop consensus among partner representatives around key issues; and focus monitoring and reporting systems on the performance of the partnership towards catalysing results, rather than compliance 'to the letter' of the original plan.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Institutionalise a range of responsive (fit-for-purpose) governance practices for working with different sizes and types of partners.

**ACHIEVE THIS BY:**

Establishing a new mechanism of 'small-scale funding agreement' with lower levels of compliance requirements for partnering with small and low-risk women's civil society organisations.

Initiating, for strategic partnerships, working governance mechanisms at the (pre-funding) design stage to build familiarity between organisational representatives and refine working modalities.

Establishing, for all partnerships, the practice of having 'inception phases' of sufficient length to build consensus and publish joint analyses.

Seeking ways to strengthen joint implementation of UN Joint Programmes, building on successful experiences in joint planning.

Use UN Women strengths in partnership, network-building, and UN coordination as three powerful drivers of change to counter challenging external contexts and reliance on short-term non-core funding. Promulgate throughout UN Women the lessons learned about working in partnerships effectively: improve governance arrangements and practices for strategic partnerships, joint programmes, and formal alliances. This should include mechanisms for scaling governance and compliance requirements to better fit with the size and risk of different partners and partnerships.

CONCLUSION 5: UN Women is overcoming barriers to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through building alliances and networks of partners.

UN Women comparative strengths are most pronounced in alliance and network building, leveraging the integrated mandate, and working with partners. Network-building is a key driver of UN Women contributions to impact – especially when linked to strategic partnerships and formal collaboration. Using such approaches, UN Women is overcoming barriers to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, despite reliance on short-term non-core resources poorly suited to gender-transformative programming. Given the short timeframe of many interventions, utilizing local capacities for implementation and supporting the development of informal networks contributed to

better sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Focus country-level partnerships and programming on overcoming barriers for gender equality and women's empowerment by leveraging positive external drivers of change.

External factors identified by evaluations as influencing UN Women outcomes were found to have effects varying from positive to neutral to negative. This suggests that scope exists to influence the 'balance' of external drivers in favour of UN Women outcomes. While not all such drivers can be influenced by UN Women – such as the level of broader aid-system presence, or the political environment, including level of crises – there is scope to leverage some.

These include:

**1** The level of participation of civil society in national processes

**2** The wider information environment

**3** The legal and policy framework and level of gender mainstreaming

**4** Multisector coordination across state entities

**5** Level of grassroots focus and meeting wider community needs beyond gender relations.v

## HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Conclusion 6: UN Women is uniquely positioned to address the provision of economic empowerment and access to justice for women and girl survivors of gender-based violence in humanitarian response.

While the absence of position within the Inter Agency Standing Committee structure limits opportunities for UN Women to assume a clear leadership role, UN Women has been able to address uniquely the provision of economic empowerment and access to justice for women and girl survivors of gender-based violence. This complements the work of the humanitarian cluster system in providing safe spaces, psychosocial support and the minimum initial service package to reproductive health needs at the onset of every humanitarian crisis. This is a promising entry point for UN Women to work in partnership with other UN agencies. Building a case for UN Women to make a wider contribution to humanitarian coordination requires the deployment of sufficient in-country technical expertise in emergencies.

While most of the evidence on humanitarian action focuses on UN Women contribution to, and positioning in, the response, there is a secondary set of evidence that indicates the gendered nature of most disaster risk-reduction and disaster preparedness institutions. Given the implications for determining the effectiveness and focus of humanitarian responses, supporting gender mainstreaming in national disaster planning institutions could also be an important entry point for UN Women.



IMAN, A 38-YEAR-OLD SYRIAN WOMAN FROM JORDAN'S AL-MAFRAQ GOVERNORATE IS A BENEFICIARY OF THE 'SPRING FORWARD FOR WOMEN' PROJECT.

UN WOMEN/CHRISTOPHER HERWIG

Recommendation 6: Build experience and demand for UN Women work in humanitarian action through delivering concrete results with partners in economic empowerment, access to justice, and disaster preparedness.

Grow demand in the humanitarian systems for UN Women to contribute a wider gender coordination role by consistently and collaboratively delivering results in the following areas: women's economic empowerment and access to justice for survivors of violence; gender mainstreaming and advocacy in humanitarian response; and gender mainstreaming in disaster risk reduction and preparedness. Develop these by working in close and supportive partnership with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN Refugee Agency, UN Population Fund and UN Children's Fund.

### ACHIEVE THIS BY:

Prioritising the availability of gender technical staff in emergencies to support gender mainstreaming in partnership with UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and/or UN Refugee Agency.

Prioritising programmatic activities and fundraising around the provision of economic empowerment and access to justice to survivors of gender-based violence in close partnership with relevant agencies.

Focusing UN Women leadership contributions around the humanitarian-development continuum, including integrating peacebuilding experiences and mainstreaming gender in national disaster preparedness.

Leveraging the consistent provision of these concrete contributions to support the case for UN Women membership of the Inter Agency Standing Committee.

## PERSPECTIVE FROM MANAGEMENT

# Learning from evaluation for stronger programming and implementation

Evaluation is both a management tool, by which we reflect and learn, and a means for member states, donors and other stakeholders to gain evidence-based information and knowledge about our performance and results. While evaluation is a key instrument for accountability and learning for the entire organization, insights from evaluations are of utmost importance for the Programme Division to continuously improve and shape our programming and businesses practices at all levels.

This is the reason why we made evaluation an integral part of the fabric of our Strategic Plan at the corporate level and Strategic Notes at the field level. Lessons and evidence from evaluations have been used to establish, refine and adjust strategic priorities, performance management, change management processes and strategic decision-making. Over the last four years, significant efforts have been made by UN Women to strengthen results-based systems and performance while ensuring that our work remains relevant to the rapidly changing context and priorities both within the UN systems and beyond.

The annual meta-analysis in particular provides us with a unique opportunity for reflection by providing a cohesive picture of our performance and patterns of organizational effectiveness and efficiency results over the years. The analysis is useful also in highlighting what we are doing well, underscoring where we need improvement and identifying drivers of change that are critical to sustain our growth trajectory and impact on gender equality.

As made evident in the analysis, UN Women has been purposeful in its efforts to effectively manage its limited resources and deliver on the Strategic Plan priorities across all thematic areas. Our approach of enhancing national and local capacities and strategic partnership have been instrumental in expanding our reach and sustaining our impact. The progress captured in relation to the operationalization of the flagship programmes and the positive results in humanitarian response is an indication of our early success for potential scale-up. The integration of UN Women interventions with the UN system, especially at the country-level, has been recognized by the analysis as key to addressing some of the resource gaps faced by UN Women, including creating an 'enabling environment' for gender equality and women's empowerment.

But we also noted several areas where UN Women needs to do more especially challenges related to securing multi-year funding, scaling up of high impact and innovative approaches and implementation of joint programmes on gender equality. We are also cognizant of the need

MARIA-NOEL VAEZA-OGILVIE
DIRECTOR, PROGRAMME DIVISION
UN WOMEN

to continuously invest and sharpen our tools, systems and mechanisms to capture and track UN Women contributions to outcomes and ultimately our real impact in all areas of our work. Within the United Nations Development System repositioning process, UN Women is taking and will continue to take bold steps in leveraging the UN system to deliver results for all women and girls. In this light, we will remain at the vanguard in the development and roll-out of the new generation of UNDAFs with a focus on gender equality and empowerment of women.

In sum, the insights and recommendations captured in the analysis will be used to make UN Women ever more effective in improving the lives of women and girls and delivering value for our financial partners. The recommendations offer useful pointers, particularly as UN Women readies itself to contribute to the repositioning of the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda with a special focus on Goal 5.

# THE META-ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY:
## Synthetizing evidence

JORDAN'S FIFTH NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY PARADE. AT THE PARADE, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS SHOWCASED THEIR GRASP OF MODERN TECHNOLOGIES WITH PROJECTS SPANNING RENEWABLE ENERGY AND WATER TO ROBOTICS.

UN WOMEN/HAMZA MAZRAAWI

**The approach of this meta-analysis was consistent with the 2016 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 UN Women Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System meta-evaluation 2017:** 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 the labelling of that statement 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.
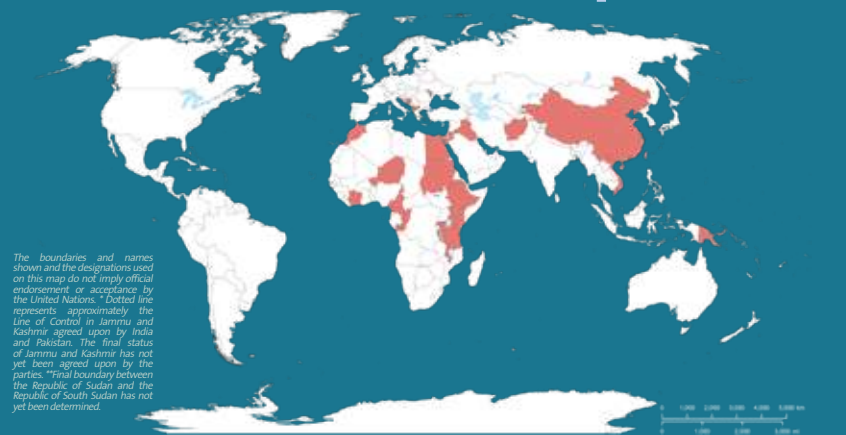
**4** **Undertaking a quantitative assessment** in Excel that analysed the frequency with which evaluation findings referred to positive or negative performance in relation to various aspects of development effectiveness specified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee.

**5** **Conducting a final qualitative analysis of high-level drivers** of UN Women's performance, areas of innovation and examples of positive practice.

**SCOPE OF THE META-ANALYSIS**

## 39 EVALUATIONS

## 34 COUNTRIES

5 PROGRAMME PRESENCE COUNTRIES PREVIOUSLY NOT COVERED

*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. * Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. **Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined.*

## About the Independent Evaluation Service

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organization's mandate, including its normative, operational and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments and civil society organizations.

## About UN Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.  UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

# LEARN MORE ABOUT GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION



## READ TRANSFORM

**ISSUE 1**
Gender-responsive evaluation systems and policies

**ISSUE 2**
Women's economic empowerment

**ISSUE 3**
Normative support work

**ISSUE 4**
Meta-analysis

**ISSUE 5**
Gender mainstreaming

**ISSUE 6**
Gender-responsive evaluation:
A call for action to leave no one behind

**ISSUE 7**
The UN coordination mandate issue

**ISSUE 8**
What can we learn from UN Women evaluations?

**ISSUE 9**
UN Women's regional architecture evaluation

**ISSUE 10**
The strategic partnerships evaluation issue

**ISSUE 11**
A unique view of the bigger picture

**ISSUE 12**
The women's political participation and leadership issue

http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/accountability/evaluation/transform-magazine

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