

TRANSFORM

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Dear Readers,

The seventeenth issue of TRANSFORM is out! We are pleased that the magazine has gained traction and allows our community to be closely connected with the work of UN Women and gender-responsive evaluation. This issue focuses on a central topic in today's world: ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamentally addressed in humanitarian action.

UN Women has been working in this area since 2011, increasing its contribution every year and establishing itself as a humanitarian actor since 2014. UN Women's work in humanitarian action is focused on ensuring that women and girls play a greater role in, and are better served by, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response and recovery process efforts in order to support their empowerment and resilience.

The evaluation concludes that while the growth in UN Women's humanitarian work is positive, a more strategic and consistent approach is needed to make further progress. This will require a new detailed response-level strategy with specific approaches to effectively engage in coordination mechanisms, as well as innovative resource mobilization strategies, partnerships, and knowledge management and learning initiatives. Increasing the effectiveness and impact of UN Women's humanitarian action work to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable women and girls are among the recommendations of this evaluation.

We hope you find this new TRANSFORM issue useful to better understand the importance of advancing gender equality approaches in humanitarian interventions and the important role of UN Women in this area. The evaluation will support UN Women in strengthening its work as well as contributing to building knowledge and organizational learning.

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Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.

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The UN Women's Humanitarian Action Issue

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ON THE COVER Jordan – Empowerment through employment for Syrian refugee women in Jordan.
Jordan, Za'atari Refugee Camp, October 2018.

Photo: UN Women/Christopher Herwig



Gender equality at the heart of humanitarian action: the work of UN Women

It is widely recognized that humanitarian action delivers better results when it accounts for the needs of women and girls, and when gender equality and women's empowerment are central to all aspects of the humanitarian programme cycle. UN Women is one of the most important actors in ensuring that this is achieved consistently and well.

Since 2011, UN Women has played an active role in focusing attention on gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action.

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UN Women's work in humanitarian action covers its three mandated areas: normative support functions, United Nations system coordination, and operational activities in an integrated and mutually reinforcing manner. UN Women is a very young actor in humanitarian action; however, the evolution and trajectory of its work in this area has been positive.

UN Women's humanitarian work is guided by the vision that women and girls: a) contribute to, and have greater influence in, building peace and resilience; and b) benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts, and from humanitarian action as articulated under outcome 5 of UN Women's Strategic Plan 2018–2021. UN Women's approach to humanitarian action goes beyond direct response and towards the transformative benefits of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

By 2018, UN Women's contributions to humanitarian action included: crisis prevention; preparedness; responses to reduce vulnerabilities, address risks and promote resilience; and leveraging of women's leadership across the humanitarian–development nexus. UN Women has supported normative work to assist Member States and the United Nations in developing and implementing humanitarian action policies. The Entity also assumed the role of coordinator for the United Nations system and the humanitarian community at various programming levels during humanitarian responses.

Through its normative work and at the global level, UN Women ensured that recommendations to address disaster risk and gender responsiveness were included in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015). UN Women was one of the main drivers in ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women were overarching themes in the seven core commitments agreed at the World Humanitarian Summit.

UN Women's coordination work involves providing expertise for gender-inclusive responses to humanitarian coordination mechanisms and disaster risk reduction bodies. At the global level, UN Women co-chairs and serves as the Secretariat of the Reference Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action under the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the main global humanitarian coordination mechanism. The Entity also participates in the Grand Bargain Facilitation Group and convenes the informal Friends of Gender Group for the Grand Bargain. At the field level, UN Women works with regional coordination mechanisms where they exist, as well as United Nations Humanitarian Country

Teams, clusters and inter-cluster coordination groups to ensure that humanitarian coordination mechanisms and humanitarian action policies, programmes and operational procedures and standards respond to women and girls' specific needs.

HOW CRISES AFFECT WOMEN DIFFERENTLY

- Gender-based violence
- Exclusion from life-saving services
- Exclusion from decision-making processes
- Increased care-related tasks
- Economic vulnerability

Two Flagship Programme Initiatives (FPIs) guided much of UN Women's work on humanitarian action at the operational level. The Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) in Crisis Response FPI provided a crisis response framework to ensure that humanitarian response planning, frameworks and programming are gender inclusive and responsive, and that protection and economic opportunities are available for women. The Addressing the Gender Inequality of Risk and Promoting Community Resilience to Natural Hazards in a Changing Climate FPI focused primarily on prevention and making gender equality and women's empowerment central to coordinated, effective humanitarian action and crisis response.

GAPS DESPITE INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

- Lack of accountability for gender
- Gaps in data and understanding of the gendered impacts of crises
- Barriers hindering women's participation and leadership
- Lack of targeted investment in women's empowerment, livelihoods and resilience

UN Women also established the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, a flexible and rapid global pooled funding mechanism, which aims to significantly increase financing for women's participation, leadership and empowerment in both humanitarian action and peace and security settings. It provides direct support to increase the capacity of local women to respond to crises and emergencies.

Over the course of 2011–2017, UN Women's contributions to humanitarian action have grown. From working in four countries with a portfolio of US\$ 3.4 million in 2011, UN Women's annual humanitarian action budget has increased by 700 per cent to US\$ 27.2 million in 2017. UN Women's humanitarian action budgets are, however, almost completely dependent on non-core funds – an average of 95 per cent of funding under the scope of this evaluation was non-core.

EXAMPLES OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS ON HUMANITARIAN ACTION PRODUCED BY UN WOMEN

- Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Sussex "[The effect of gender equality programming on humanitarian outcomes](#)", 2015
- [Placing Women and Girls at the Centre](#), (IASC), 2015
- [Promoting the Rights, Needs and Agency of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action](#), 2016
- [UN Women, empowerment and accountability for gender equality in humanitarian action and crisis response](#), 2017
- [IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action](#), 2017
- [IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action, Policy Gender Equality and The Empowerment of Women And Girls In Humanitarian Action](#), 2017



ACCOUNTABILITY S LEARNING

GATE System:

The Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use

An online Public Information Management System, which facilitates UN Women's efforts to strategically plan and effectively use evaluations for accountability, management for results, and knowledge management.

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Why evaluate UN Women's work in humanitarian action?

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