



META-SYNTHESIS OF UN WOMEN EVALUATIONS – 2017/2018

Final Report



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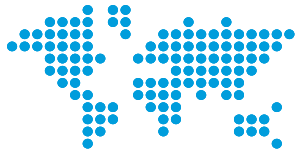
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INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND AUDIT SERVICES (IEAS)

Independent Evaluation Service (IES)

UN WOMEN

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ACRONYMS

CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ESA	East and Southern Africa
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FGE	Fund for Gender Equality
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GSC	Gender Scorecard
GTG	Gender Thematic Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEAS	Independent Evaluation and Audit Services
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RBM	Results-Based Management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolutions

UNSDCF	UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
VAW	Violence Against Women
WCA	West and Central Africa
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WFP	World Food Programme
WLPP	Women's Leadership and Political Participation
WPS	Women Peace Security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The purpose of this meta-synthesis is to contribute to organizational learning and effective knowledge management through the identification of recurring findings, lessons learned and evidence on the key areas of work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). The synthesis will help to inform the forthcoming mid-term review of the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021, and other corporate and country-level processes. The synthesis has captured internal and external enablers that drive or impede progress towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

This is the first synthesis conducted during the current UN Women Strategic Plan; however, it should be noted that it drew on the evaluation of programmes and interventions that were designed and implemented during the previous Strategic Plan. Nonetheless, the results achieved and reported contribute to current Strategic Plan outcomes and the findings are expected to inform and provide insights for future implementation.¹

The meta-synthesis is based on 39 evaluation reports completed during 2017 and 2018 of UN Women supported programmes and interventions valued at US\$ 527 million,² covering 80 countries overall (through global and regional evaluations) and 25 individual countries through country-specific evaluations.³ The evaluation reports included for the synthesis were rated either good (19) or very good (18), while two were rated fair by GERAAS.⁴

Approach and methodology

The approach to this synthesis is complementary to previous meta-analyses; however, the analytical framework has been revised taking into consideration UN Women's institutional growth and maturity and in line with current Strategic Plan priorities. The revised analytical framework takes at its heart the complementarity of UN Women's integrated mandate spanning normative support; UN coordination and operational activities, including features related to organizational effectiveness and efficiency of results; and internal and external factors that are reported to enable or inhibit performance.

The meta-synthesis was based solely on a desk review of corporate and decentralized evaluation reports. The synthesis involved both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The analysis was undertaken in accordance with the pre-established OECD-DAC approach for conducting development effectiveness reviews. The data for analysis was extracted from the key findings, conclusions and recommendations presented in the 39 evaluation reports, as well as the lessons learned and good practices identified. Each evaluation report was reviewed and analysed considering the evaluation findings/insights with reference to: (i) relevance; (ii) the achievement of objectives and expected results (effectiveness); (iii) efficiency; (iv) the culture of results; and (v) sustainability, and the respective subcriteria. The findings on 15 subcriteria were rated "highly satisfactory," "satisfactory," "unsatisfactory" and "highly unsatisfactory." The synthesis identified contributing factors, both enabling and hindering, for the five main criteria.

¹ The Strategic Plan 2014–2017 had six Impact Areas, while the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 has five Outcomes.

² Includes US\$ 203.5 million and US\$ 84 million of two global/corporate evaluations (see Annex 1 for evaluation titles).

³ Compiled from evaluation reports reviewed for the synthesis.

⁴ Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System.

Key Insights

OVERARCHING CONCLUSION

Overall, UN Women has achieved and sustained its strategic positioning across its integrated mandate often in volatile, complex and resource-constrained settings. However, UN Women's continued effectiveness critically depends on its ability to protect and sustain policy gains and to establish clear and robust policy-practice linkages to influence social norm changes at community, household and individual levels.

Notwithstanding constraining financial and human resources, UN Women has been able to leverage its institutional expertise and integrated mandate to advance gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE). Despite relatively limited resources, there is growing recognition that UN Women has contributed to a stronger enabling environment to support GEWE. UN Women's strategic partnerships have to a great extent led to important results, particularly in its normative work. Although not on a large scale, programmatic interventions supported by UN Women have yielded positive changes in a number of women's lives. UN Women also achieved key results in greater prioritization and coordination of GEWE-related issues in the United Nations Development System (UNDS).

However, evaluations stressed the need for increased attention towards protecting and sustaining policy

Moreover, UN Women could do more through UNDS and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) to further promote the GEWE agenda by more forcefully highlighting gaps and suggesting areas of collaboration, joint advocacy, research, policy engagement and joint resource mobilization. UN Women should engage with donors and seek multiple avenues to secure multi-year resource commitments to produce tangible and lasting results. In general, evaluations called for UN Women to strike an appropriate balance between its scarce resources (human and financial) and the most relevant and effective interventions where its comparative and collaborative advantage is best exploited to yield greater impact.

RELEVANCE

UN Women supported programmes and interventions remain highly relevant. They are suited to the needs of target groups and are aligned with national priorities and international normative frameworks.

Nearly all evaluations reported satisfactory or higher findings for the suitability of UN Women programmes to the needs of the target group and for its ability to develop effective partnerships; and two thirds of evaluation reports demonstrated highly satisfactory findings on interventions being aligned with national development goals and GEWE priorities.

Through its projects and programmes, UN Women targets marginalized and vulnerable groups, specifically women and girls in various contexts to address

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