

UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION

CORPORATE THEMATIC EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION

August 2019

UN Women/ Christopher Herwig

What was evaluated?

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 integral to all aspects of the humanitarian programme cycle. UN Women stands as one of the most important actors to ensure 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. UN Women's work in this area covers the three roles mandated by its founding resolution: normative support functions, UN 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 UN Women's work in this area has been positive, being involved in all aspects of humanitarian action, from small livelihood projects that give women critical income, to essential policy work in global forums like the World Humanitarian Summit and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Over the course of 2011 to 2017, UN Women's contributions to humanitarian action have been growing. From working in four countries with a portfolio of USD 3.4 million in 2011, UN Women's humanitarian action annual budget has grown 700% to USD 27.2 million in 2017. UN Women's humanitarian action budgets are, however, almost completely dependent on non-core funds (an average of 95% of the funding under the scope of this evaluation was non-core).

What did the evaluation conclude?

CONCLUSION 1

UN Women helps to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women remains central to humanitarian action.

CONCLUSION 2

Stronger links are needed between UN Women's global normative work and humanitarian coordination mechanisms where needs and priorities are determined.

CONCLUSION 3

UN-Women should continue to build on its "development" work while increasing its focus on the "humanitarian" side of the nexus.

CONCLUSION 4

Working in partnership can ensure that UN-Women makes contributions at sufficient scale while increasing opportunities for funding.

CONCLUSION 5

There is significant evidence that UN-Women has been highly effective in its global normative work.

CONCLUSION 6

Lessons from UN-Women's country level work should serve to improve programming approaches globally and serve as a catalyst for longer-term transformative change.

CONCLUSION 7

UN Women reliance on non-core resources tends to make it more reactive and less strategic, and thus less efficient overall.

CONCLUSION 8

UN Women’s capacity and expertise in humanitarian action vary across offices, risking UN Women’s ability to deliver consistently.

CONCLUSION 9

UN Women’s work exemplifies gender equality and human rights approaches.

How can UN Women improve?

RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATION #1

Develop a response-level strategy to complement UN Women’s global humanitarian strategy.



RECOMMENDATION #2

Identify necessary leadership, minimum levels of staffing and office structures for a response-level strategy in humanitarian settings.



RECOMMENDATION #3

Develop global partnership frameworks with OCHA, UNHCR and UNFPA building on experience in partnerships in different contexts.












RECOMMENDATION #4

Increase effectiveness and impact in humanitarian action by better linking UN Women’s work to system-wide responses.



EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

 <p>Formative evaluation</p>	 <p>5 country visits (Cameroon, Bangladesh, Colombia, South Sudan and Jordan) + New York & Geneva</p>	 <p>23 focus group discussions</p>
 <p>Utilization-focused evaluation</p>	 <p>461 semi-structured interviews</p>	 <p>Self-assessment questionnaire (6 regional humanitarian advisors)</p>
	 <p>Extensive portfolio review (39 countries)</p>	 <p>Survey with 221 responses (33% response rate)</p>
	 <p>Over 550 documents reviewed</p>	

Disclaimer: The text of this brief does not necessarily reflect the views of UN Women, its Executive Board or the United Nations Member States. The text has not been edited to official publication standards and UN Women accepts no responsibility for error.