



Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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Evaluation

Evidence and lessons on types of UN-Women support: a meta-synthesis of UN-Women evaluations¹

Summary

This report collates insights and evidence on the key types of support provided by UN-Women during the Strategic Plan period (2018–2021) from 67 corporate and decentralized evaluations. The evaluative evidence is organized around: normative support; integrated policy advice and thought leadership; capacity development and technical assistance; and advocacy and social mobilization. Based on the evaluations, the report outlines key insights, good practices and impediments with a geographic and thematic focus.

The primary audience for this meta-synthesis is internal UN-Women stakeholders, including the Executive Board and UN-Women personnel.

I. Introduction

1. The aim of this meta synthesis is to collate insights and evidence on the key types of support provided by UN-Women during the Strategic Plan period (2018–2021) from corporate and decentralized evaluations. UN-Women’s operational activities involving partnerships entail several types of support in line with the Entity’s comparative advantage: normative support; United Nations coordination for gender equality and women’s empowerment; integrated policy advice; capacity development; advocacy and social mobilization; and technical assistance for essential services.

¹ Note: the present document was processed in its entirety by UN-Women.

2. UN-Women's new Strategic Plan (2022–2025) aims to guide the Entity for the next four years, with an eye towards the 2030 deadline to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This meta-synthesis focuses on types of UN-Women support that have not been covered in recent syntheses and evaluations, and that are highlighted in the new Strategic Plan: normative support; integrated policy advice and thought leadership; capacity development and technical assistance; and advocacy and social mobilization.² Based on the evaluations analysed, it outlines key insights, good practices and impediments with a geographic and thematic focus.

A. Purpose and scope

3. The meta-synthesis contributes to UN-Women's organizational knowledge base and the primary audience for the synthesis is UN-Women stakeholders, including the Executive Board and UN-Women personnel. The analysis includes a forward-looking aspect and makes links with the proposed key approaches in the new Strategic Plan.

4. The sample for this meta-synthesis includes corporate, regional and country portfolio evaluations conducted by the UN-Women Independent Evaluation Service between 2018 and 2020, two global evaluations from 2018, and decentralized evaluations undertaken in 2019 and 2020 by other UN-Women programmatic offices with teams of external evaluators. Evaluations with a Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) rating of fair and above are included, bringing the total sample to 67 evaluations, of which four were completed in 2018, 32 in 2019 and 31 in 2020. The majority of evaluations are in English (52), followed by Spanish (11) and French (4).

5. In terms of geographic coverage, the evaluation sample is well distributed. The highest number of evaluations come from the Americas and the Caribbean (AC), comprising 21 per cent of the sample. This is followed by evaluations from East and Southern Africa (ESA) and Asia and the Pacific (AP) (16 per cent each), Europe and Central Asia (ECA), Arab States (12 per cent each) and corporate evaluations (10 per cent). Evaluations from West and Central Africa (WCA) comprise 7 per cent of the sample. Decentralized evaluations conducted by headquarters programmatic units and cross-regional evaluations make up 3 per cent of the sample.

B. Approach and methodology

6. The meta-synthesis employs a theory-based approach by developing a framework of analysis to link the types of support to UN-Women's broader theory of change. Detailed definitions for each of the key types of support were used to create a comprehensive coding structure and insights were organized around results, good practices and limitations.³

² Support provided through UN coordination was extensively covered in the 2020 meta-synthesis, and technical assistance on essential services will be considered along with other types of technical assistance and capacity development, in alignment with the formulation of the new Strategic Plan.

³ See Annex 2 for definitions.

7. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods was used to assess the evidence and extract emerging trends and key insights, and develop opportunities for the way forward.⁴

Limitations

8. As with any meta-synthesis, the analysis and findings in this report are limited to the level and depth of insights provided in the evaluation sample. Certain types of support were covered more comprehensively than others, and the insights in these areas are richer and more nuanced. For instance, capacity development efforts were highlighted in all 67 evaluations, while policy advice was mentioned in 40 evaluations. To the extent possible, the analysis takes this caveat into account when mapping the evidence.

9. Due to the geographic variation in the evaluation sample, some regions are covered to a greater degree. To mitigate this issue, the report is careful to ensure that illustrative highlights are drawn in a geographically representative manner.

II. Findings on key types of support

10. While coverage of the four key types of support provided by UN-Women varies within the sample, each type of support is fairly well represented. As presented in Table 1, UN-Women's capacity development and technical assistance support is covered in all 67 evaluations. UN-Women's advocacy and social mobilization support is covered in the majority of evaluations (85 per cent, or 58 evaluations), followed by UN-Women's normative support, which appears in 42 evaluations (62 per cent). Integrated policy advice support is the least extensively covered, with 40 evaluations (59 per cent) reporting findings.⁵

11. Table 1. Coverage of the types of support provided by UN-Women.

Type of support	Number of evaluations	Frequency
Normative support	42	62%
Integrated policy advice	40	59%
Capacity development and technical assistance	67	100%
Advocacy and social mobilization	58	85%

Source: Compiled by the meta-synthesis team.

⁴ In addition to detailed desk reviews, NVivo software was used to systematically map and analyse the body of existing evaluative evidence.

⁵ When describing the frequency with which an observation was noted, the synthesis is consistent with previous reports in using the following metric: Most = over 75 per cent of the evaluations contributing to an observation/ finding; Many = between 51 per cent and 75 per cent; Some/Several = between 20 per cent and 50 per cent; Few = less than 20 percent.

A. Normative support

Key insights

12. Evaluations related to normative support indicated several instances of UN-Women working to strengthen national and legal frameworks, contributing to the creation of laws and policies to protect women's rights, and supporting mechanisms for gender mainstreaming. Evaluations noted that UN-Women provided successful technical and advocacy support to the adoption of laws intended to raise women's representation in governance. The Entity also provided technical support for laws and policies to advance gender equality and the gender responsiveness of various laws. UN-Women has worked with national and local ministries in several countries to push for gender-responsive budgets, and gender-responsive policymaking and planning through a combination of technical assistance and advocacy. UN-Women also supported baseline legislative assessments and the development of draft laws.

13. By convening and supporting the representation of government stakeholders at international forums, UN-Women has worked to support enhanced compliance with global normative frameworks in alignment with the SDGs. For instance, the corporate evaluation of UN-Women's Contribution to Humanitarian Action recognized UN-Women's contribution to relevant normative frameworks, policies and global forums such as the World Humanitarian Summit to advocate for gender-responsive humanitarian response policies and programmes. UN-Women effectively leveraged platforms such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to foster dialogue between governments and women's organizations.

14. Key to all these efforts was ensuring and enhancing the inclusion of women's organizations in intergovernmental negotiations; supporting governments to establish gender units; and providing gender focal points for governments. One example of this was UN-Women's work on ending violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the Entity worked closely with the country-level gender mechanisms to support work on the national Gender Action Plan. Similarly in Mexico, UN-Women contributed to strengthening gender institutions in the country; the generation of mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in public policies; and the alignment of normative frameworks with international commitments.

United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

15. UN-Women's work with governments and women's organizations in support of implementation of CEDAW was highlighted in evaluations spanning several geographic areas. For instance, in Bangladesh, UN-Women supported civil society organizations (CSOs) to take a leading role in awareness-raising and advocacy for state implementation of CEDAW. In Guatemala, UN-Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) jointly supported the CEDAW Guatemala Strategic Women's Alliance through technical and financial support to rural and indigenous women's organizations. In Thailand, UN-Women supported the Government to implement and report on CEDAW, and also provided technical inputs to national plans aligned with CEDAW. UN-Women has facilitated South-South cooperation on the issue (e.g. between Uruguay and Mexico). At the regional level, the UN-Women Europe and Central Asia programme on ending violence against women achieved results in alignment with the Council of Europe

Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and CEDAW by supporting the voice and agency of women.

Good practices

16. A number of good practices were highlighted in evaluations, given the breadth of UN-Women's normative support. One of the key practices was fostering long-term alliances and mutually beneficial country-level partnerships with various government departments, non-state actors and CSOs. Provision of ongoing normative support involving a range of actors has been a successful strategy for UN-Women, and long-term engagements enhanced the legitimacy of the partnerships. These partnerships, in combination with UN-Women's reputation, are important in establishing channels of influence. For instance, at the normative level, the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) corporate evaluation on governance and national planning highlighted the importance of relationship-building and found that "UN Women's added value could be said to lie in creating or expanding policy or political spaces for gender responsiveness," often through technical support and "creating connections between stakeholders and opportunities for dialogue." At the global level, UN-Women has strategically coordinated with other United Nations agencies and participated in joint United Nations programmes to strengthen the gender responsiveness of global normative frameworks.

17. Another important factor was alignment with national and international priorities. UN-Women's interventions were generally well aligned with normative frameworks and responsive to the needs and expectations of local stakeholders. UN-Women has shown the ability to adapt to political opportunities. A related good practice was in fostering national ownership and national champions to ensure sustainability. For instance, in Bangladesh, UN-Women facilitated the relevant ministry to take a leadership role in national, regional and global processes for gender-responsive migration governance. UN-Women successfully convened meetings and supported women to actively participate in national and global dialogues, such as the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Palestine.

Impediments

18. One of the main impediments to effective normative support is the need for long-term engagement with multiple layers of government to support normative frameworks. In many instances, there was a high turnover of government officials and a subsequent loss of capacity within ministries. Engaging with governments is complicated and UN-Women needs to ensure that it engages not just key ministries, but various levels of government. This is also important at the programme development stage to foster ownership and sustainability.

19. A related impediment is insufficient support to implementation of normative frameworks and gender-responsive policies. Some of the factors influencing this were outside the direct control of UN-Women, such as discriminatory social norms; political challenges or instability; and, most often, a lack of budget and plans for implementation. Implementation was also hindered by the lack of disaggregated data and monitoring systems. Several evaluations pointed to inadequate monitoring and evaluation in this area, with low resource allocation highlighted as the key constraint. UN-Women's support to implementation of frameworks was not captured in evaluations, though most reports recognized that this would require longer-term

engagements, and improvements in the availability of relevant baseline and follow-up data to measure changes in gender equality.

20. Other internal impediments identified in a few evaluations included inadequate needs assessments and lack of coherence. At times, UN-Women's efforts appeared ad hoc and the Entity was seen to be involved in a wide range of activities rather than focusing its efforts in a strategic manner. UN-Women could also improve its internal learning systems and build its own capacity around risk management related to political transitions.

B. Integrated policy advice

Key insights

21. Most evaluations covering UN-Women's support to policy advice demonstrated results related to national and local laws and reforms. UN-Women provided a range of technical support, advocacy and capacity-building while working with CSOs and governments to ensure the inclusion of varied stakeholders in law-making. For instance, UN-Women contributed to ending violence against women by supporting advocacy and providing technical support for policies to address violence against women and girls in Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Uganda and Viet Nam.

22. UN-Women also supported policy advice through the production of policy-relevant research. Examples included the Eid bi Eid programme in Jordan, where UN-Women worked with the Ministry of Social Development to provide research on gender and fiscal reform, and support to a National Survey on Sexual Harassment of Women in the Workplace with the Ministry of Women and Child Development in India. In Viet Nam, UN-Women used recommendations from its gender assessment to successfully influence the adoption of a more gender-responsive Labour Code. Similar joint efforts with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were also successful in Georgia and contributed to the approval of a new Labour Code which integrates issues related to protection against sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sustainable Development Goals

23. UN-Women supported governments in strengthening the production and use of gender statistics, particularly those related to the measurement of progress towards achievement of the SDGs and implementation of gender equality objectives in the SDGs. The corporate evaluation on governance and national planning found that UN-Women had engaged with national partners and led the development of a robust methodology for measurement of SDG indicator 5.c.1: "Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment". In El Salvador, at the request of the Government, UN-Women supported the monitoring of SDG indicators with a particular focus on SDG 5, and also supported the identification and elaboration of national indicators for the implementation of the national sustainable development agenda. In India, UN-Women secured a commitment from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation to bridge existing gender-related data gaps by conducting a national time-use survey that will feed into the implementation of gender goals in the SDGs at both the subnational and national level.

Good practices

24. Alignment with the local context and good timing stand out as good practices highlighted in the evaluations. These were a result of consultation with multiple stakeholders and the establishment of collaborative spaces. For instance, the evaluation of the programme, “Standards and Engagement for Ending Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, found that it was well timed as the government was already in the process of developing the new Law on Protection from Domestic Violence. This enabled harmonization with the Istanbul Convention and also generated more interest in the issue from various stakeholders. In Colombia, UN-Women collaborated with the Legal Commission for Women's Equity and the Congressional Women's Caucus to support legislative monitoring with a gender perspective and to identify elements of progress in relation to women's rights and gender equality.

25. Another good practice is the production of highly relevant research, which facilitates conversations and advocacy around policy issues. Research that is timely and aligns well with key issues can help mainstream gender-sensitive processes. The corporate evaluation of UN-Women's flagship programme initiatives found that the Progress of the World's Women report presented research that was robust and contributed to shaping the contextual understanding of issues among UN-Women staff and, to some extent, supported advocates, civil society, governments and the media by providing access to compelling evidence. The evaluation found some instances of influence on programme and policy interventions, which was stronger when potential end users were involved at an early stage in the research. Stakeholders interviewed for the Country Portfolio Evaluation in Paraguay acknowledged that the strong support provided by UN-Women contributed to the overall strengthening of knowledge about gender inequality in the country. Another good example was the Gender Peace and Security Programme in Zimbabwe, where UN-Women and partners produced a policy document and brief for gender mainstreaming in prisons which was endorsed by the Commissioner General of Prisons. In India, the five-year programme entitled “Promoting women's political leadership and governance in India and South Asia” targeted the lack of credible evidence on women's leadership by developing key training modules, in addition to research on related topics at the national and state level. For instance, the analysis of inclusiveness in peacekeeping forces led to constructive dialogues with personnel on ending conflict-related sexual violence.

Impediments

26. The most commonly cited impediment to successful support on policy advice was inadequate implementation support. The path from enactment to implementation requires substantial resources in terms of time, effort and finances. Evaluations related to policy implementation overwhelmingly highlighted weak political will and a lack of adequate financing. For instance, the evaluation on Economic Empowerment of Women Home Based Workers and Excluded Groups in Pakistan found that the challenge of funding social security enshrined in laws had not been resolved by the respective provincial governments. In Nepal, the evaluation on women's economic empowerment programmes found that progress on indicator 2.1.1 (number of gender responsive economic policies/strategies/actions plans/guidelines adopted/amended in line with CEDAW recommendations) had somewhat stalled due to the transition period to a new federal structure in the country.

C. Capacity development and technical assistance

Key insights

27. As highlighted in several evaluations, capacity-building in the form of strengthening national capacities is a key activity for UN-Women. UN-Women supported capacity development of national institutions and CSOs in a wide range of areas such as results-based management, monitoring and evaluation, gender statistics, gender-responsive governance and gender-responsive laws and policies. UN-Women has adapted these efforts based on the needs of the country by tailoring activities and facilitating exchange with other governments through international forums and convening. Some good examples of working with governments included:

- UN-Women contributed to capacity-building and strengthening processes in Colombian institutions to provide women and girls with more opportunities to live free of gender-based violence. Through its support to the territorial gender observatories and the Integrated Information System on Gender Violence, UN-Women (together with government institutions) is contributing to progressively positioning the value of data as a necessary component to improve the state's response to the issue.
- In Timor-Leste, UN-Women's Women, Peace and Security project supported security institutions and their personnel in strengthening knowledge to address women's security and access to justice.
- In Liberia, UN-Women built capacities of officials from the security and justice sectors and CSO representatives to initiate important changes related to inclusive security in Liberia. The evaluation found that the catalytic efforts of the project generated a better understanding of inclusive security, gender equality and women, and peace and security that are necessary to ensure sustainable peace in communities and at the national level.
- In the Central African Republic, UN-Women worked to develop the capacities of the Government and advocacy efforts were in place to secure budgets for women's political participation. The Network of Women Parliamentarians also benefited from a fairly sustainable logistics and infrastructure support package.
- In Malawi, the Gender-Based Governance programme contributed to improving the capacity of the Parliamentary Women's Caucus and their contributions in parliamentary debates to lobby for gender-sensitive legislation. Stakeholders from the Malawi Parliament noted that the programme led to a marked improvement in contributions by women parliamentarians in general debates and on issues affecting women.
- In Ethiopia, the joint programme on rural women's economic empowerment improved government officials' capacity on conducting gender analysis and incorporating gender-sensitive indicators in programme planning and management. These activities strengthened knowledge and competence on gender mainstreaming and enabled experts at the district level to start planning activities in a gender-responsive manner.

28. UN-Women also worked to strengthen the capacities of CSOs. For instance, the regional programme on ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey concentrated on building the capacity of CSO service providers to respond to cases of violence against women, enhance case management, and work with local police in different municipalities to create guidelines or plans for the protection of victims from minority or marginalized communities. The project on “Reducing Child Marriage in Malawi and Zambia” developed the capacity of institutions to implement legislation on ending child marriage and strengthened school re-entry policies. This has promoted a favourable environment for child marriage survivors to safely return to school. Longer-term commitments on capacity-building activities are less common, but have been highlighted as areas for further work. For instance, in Papua New Guinea, UN-Women’s holistic approach involved securing long-term commitments from partners and investing in mentoring and institutional capacity-building.

29. The corporate evaluations on governance and national planning and Women, Peace and Security National Action Plans both found strong evidence of UN-Women’s technical support to partners. Evaluations also highlighted UN-Women’s technical support in developing tools related to ending violence against women. For instance, the evaluation of the UN-Women Multi-Country Office – Caribbean’s Social Mobilization Programme to end gender-based violence noted the significant technical support to programme implementation via tools and resources. The evaluation of the regional programme on ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey also recognized UN-Women’s technical support as particularly beneficial to grassroots organizations, and contributing to increased capacities of implementing organizations to manage similar projects in the future.

Training and skills

30. UN-Women provides support through training in all four key thematic areas. Examples included vocational training in Jordan; awareness-raising on issues related to rights and laws in Morocco; training of female councillors to advocate for gender-transformative legislation in the local councils in Uganda; leadership training for Q’eqchi women survivors of violence in Guatemala; training of women leaders on the role of women in conflict management in the Central African Republic; skills and knowledge related to the framework of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Palestine; and training on peacebuilding and women’s leadership in Kenya. In many cases, the training involved a training-of-trainers model to foster sustainability.

31. In women’s economic empowerment, UN-Women provided training on income-generation skills, marketing, financial management, grant opportunities and business development to enable women to open sustainable small businesses (i.e. beyond the timeline of specific programming, as seen in the Eid bi Eid programme in Jordan; the agroecological value chain programme in Morocco; the project on quality of life and empowerment of women in the North Amazon in Bolivia; and the programme for home-based workers and excluded groups in Pakistan). It is encouraging that most evaluations reported that beneficiaries were satisfied with the training and value addition, particularly the livelihoods-related training. For instance, in the Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities (Madad) programme implemented in Iraq, Jordan and Syria, the evaluation found that the quality of the livelihoods training was high in all three countries, and trainees described the programmes as effective and highly valued.

Good practices

32. Building institutional capacity and strengthening existing mechanisms were two frequently cited good practices. In Papua New Guinea, UN-Women's emphasis on strengthening existing mechanisms for gender-responsive humanitarian actions was seen to be effective. Similarly, the Hemayati joint programme (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], UN-Women and United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF]) for Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians focused on strengthening existing systems and procedures to promote women and girls' health and well-being. Evaluations that reported a high likelihood of sustainability of results highlighted capacity-building of institutions as a good practice. Examples include the Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) programme in Kenya which enhanced the institutional capacity of Action Africa Help International on gender equality and women's empowerment through the recruitment of a gender expert.

33. Another commonly highlighted good practice was the provision of comprehensive support packages and holistic approaches. The Nepal country office's holistic approach to women's economic empowerment programmes combined vocational skills with awareness-raising, knowledge-building support, leadership development and psychosocial support for the development of relevant life skills. In Bolivia, a comprehensive approach was employed to support indigenous women's ventures by strengthening institutional capacities (adaptation of infrastructure, machinery, equipment, work processes, health records, work culture, market-oriented production) and individual capacities (technical skills for transformation, and knowledge and attitudes towards gender equality and violence against women). Finally, the training-of-trainers model was seen to be important for sustainability. The evaluation of the women's economic empowerment project in Mozambique found that a more long-term, holistic strategy beyond awareness-raising and training sessions would be needed to accelerate the transformation of gender norms.

34. Baseline surveys and participatory needs assessments prior to training and capacity development were also highlighted as a good practice, particularly to ensure the inclusion of marginalized groups. In Pakistan, the baseline survey conducted at the start of the project on economic empowerment of home-based workers and excluded groups contributed significantly to the knowledge base on persons with disabilities in the country.

Impediments

35. The most commonly cited impediment to achieving impact was the short-term nature of interventions. Changes in social norms are slow and typically exceed the limited project time frames. While the quality of training provided with UN-Women's support was generally seen to be high, some training was seen as one-off interventions with limited follow-up. This issue is particularly pertinent in the context of vulnerable women, where outreach may require additional investment and time. Stakeholders also noted that continued technical support is needed in areas such as gender budgeting, and refresher orientations are required to ensure impact. Continuous capacity-building and a comprehensive plan for sustainability were missing from many programmes. A number of evaluations also reported that beneficiaries indicated a need for more training on a more frequent basis and that, at times, the training workshops were rushed.

36. Another impediment was the lack of results tracking and post-training follow-up. Capacity development and training activities included output-level indicators, measuring the number of stakeholders reached and number of training courses conducted, but there was little follow-up to assess changes in outcomes or impact. Monitoring and evaluation reports tended to focus more on activities delivered, as opposed to outcomes and improvements in well-being. Without follow-up data, it is difficult to know which strategies are truly effective, and which components are the most important in terms of maximizing the well-being of intended beneficiaries. The lack of baseline assessments prevents an analysis of how beneficiaries are selected, and whether programmes are reaching the most vulnerable women. A number of evaluations cited the absence of post-training follow-up or evaluation plans for projects. Even in cases where some pre- and post-tests were planned, they do not appear to have been used to assess effectiveness. Given the popularity of training as a tool, there is a need to assess the effectiveness of these efforts.

37. Training also needs to be relevant to stakeholders and based on comprehensive needs assessments. Target beneficiaries should be consulted on training needs: in a few evaluations, stakeholders indicated that the content was too general, not tailored to the local context, or not offered in their preferred language. Proper translation of materials and tools should be available in all relevant local languages, particularly when trying to reach beneficiaries in remote areas. Finally, some evaluations highlighted administrative challenges due to government/implementing partner or UN-Women procedures leading to delays in implementation.

D. Advocacy and social mobilization

Key insights

38. Several evaluations found that UN-Women-supported awareness-raising campaigns were successful in engaging women. While these insights are not applied to all campaigns, some instances of campaigns providing a platform and allowing communities to engage in discussions around social norms were reported. For instance, campaigns highlighted women legislators (Malawi) and were instrumental in encouraging women's participation in electoral processes by voting and standing for elections (Republic of Moldova and Nepal). Campaigns on increasing awareness of violence against women, particularly those involving a peer-to-peer approach, were undertaken in several countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Mexico, Turkey and Western Balkans). In Palestine, a project on advancing implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 was credited as being the first to conduct an awareness campaign on the issue. In the Caribbean, stakeholders agreed that UN-Women's efforts led to increased dialogues at the community level on gender-based violence which were facilitated by community sensitization sessions.

Building alliances

39. UN-Women supports building alliances across different areas of work. In Papua New Guinea, one of the transformational impacts of the Port Moresby: A Safe City for Women and Girls Programme was the creation of market vendor associations and giving a voice to previously marginalized women vendors. UN-Women's programme on supporting Syrian women's engagement in the political process included women

in conferences and consultations and led to the production of conference outcome statements and continued collaboration. Similarly, home-based workers in Pakistan were organized into neighbourhood-based “common interest groups” to raise awareness of their rights, most of which remained active even after the end of project activities. In Nigeria, UN-Women was seen to be very strong in mobilizing the voices of women and in advocacy on areas such as ending violence against women, political participation and recovery, and peace and security.

40. UN-Women also worked to build alliances that engaged men and boys for gender equality. The Hemayati project in Jordan raised awareness on the detrimental effects of child marriage among male beneficiaries in Mafraq. In Morocco, the project on economic empowerment of women through agroecological value chains for better resilience to climate change successfully involved men and engaged them to participate in activities. While initially some men were reluctant to support women-led co-ops, some have now reportedly changed their perception and contribute directly to the co-op’s work by taking on tasks that are more physically demanding for women. The HeForShe campaign in Japan also successfully engaged men in promoting gender equality. Kenya’s LEAP programme focused on men and boys to improve community awareness and advocacy on sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response.

41. UN-Women’s work with the media (including social media) was highlighted in several evaluations, including increasing the capacities of journalists and journalism students to improve the quality of reporting on gender equality issues (e.g. training in Georgia on women’s economic empowerment for print, broadcast and online media). In Ukraine, UN-Women collaborated effectively with the media through awareness-raising campaigns such as 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and HeForShe.

Good practices

42. Given UN-Women’s wide-ranging advocacy work, a number of good practices were highlighted in evaluations. One of the most frequently cited was UN-Women’s ability to successfully build and mobilize diverse alliances. For instance, the HeForShe campaign was identified in evaluations as innovative because it reached and mobilized a series of “non-traditional” actors. The Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan corporate evaluation found that engaging with actors beyond those directly responsible was critical for building ownership and UN-Women had some successes in this area.

43. Another area where UN-Women was strong was its capacity to establish political dialogue with key actors to whom non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or CSOs may not have access. UN-Women promoted the link between different institutional actors at central and local levels, CSOs and academia. A related good practice was engaging influential partners as champions. For instance, the regional programme on community-based solutions and national-level grants for promoting gender equality and engaging men and boys found that working with change-makers in Morocco such as teachers and administrators showed good potential for promoting lasting change on gender equality and women’s empowerment. Training teachers served to change institutional practices and several teachers started their own initiatives after the training, aiming to expand the topics into practical activities for students. For the same programme in Lebanon, targeting male and female youth leaders was a successful

strategy. The project included female students engaged in non-stereotypical fields as positive examples. In Timor-Leste, UN-Women partnered with women's organizations and community-based, women-led groups that were well positioned to advocate for gender-responsive conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes, including implementation of the National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325. In Malawi, the project on ending child marriage collaborated on advocacy with well-established partners who had structures in place at the national, district and community level comprising traditional leaders, faith leaders and traditional counsellors. Similarly, the Malawi Girls Guides Association used its long-term experience to identify girl mentors who provided life-skills training to child marriage survivors using its safe space model. Due to cultural resistance to change, there is a need to further engage community gatekeepers to influence community-level change.

44. UN-Women's reputation and track record on advocacy are also enabling factors. UN-Women personnel are known to be active advocates and are well placed to mobilize public and private actors through communication efforts. The Entity facilitated discussion on sensitive and contested issues and brought together a range of stakeholders due its neutral role. UN-Women maintained permanent consultations with civil society, which is an added value recognized by government agencies, NGOs, donors and other United Nations agencies.

Impediments

45. A key impediment to successful advocacy is the limited reach of campaigns in terms of engaging the most marginalized groups and reaching out to diverse allies. Evaluations consistently highlighted the need to work with diverse alliances to bring about change in power hierarchies in gender relations.

46. A related impediment is the somewhat limited duration of engagements. Continued engagement in advocacy is needed as behaviour change is a slow process requiring more than ad hoc training and mobilization campaigns. Long-term and multilevel engagements are needed for transformative changes in deeply entrenched attitudes, behaviours and cultural barriers. Several evaluations highlighted stakeholders calling for longer engagements by UN-Women, particularly in advocacy.

47. Another key area with room for improvement is the tracking of results. This is particularly important as advocacy is seen as UN-Women's strength spanning all thematic areas, and the Entity should work towards going beyond simply monitoring inputs and outputs. This would allow UN-Women to answer questions about what happens once an intervention is over, which strategies work best at ensuring sustainability, and whether stakeholders continue to implement and support interventions.

III. Opportunities and the way forward

48. Drawing on the evidence from evaluations, the following insights emerged as opportunities related to the type of support provided by UN-Women.

Complement normative support with enhanced support in the implementation of norms and standards to protect women's rights

49. UN-Women has a track record of strengthening normative frameworks for gender mainstreaming through intergovernmental support and integrated normative support. This is evidenced in the Entity's contribution to gender-responsive laws and policies; the inclusion of women's groups in intergovernmental negotiations; and support in the creation of gender units within governments. For policies and laws to materially improve the lives of women and girls, these laws and policies need to be implemented and operationalized. The implementation process may be hampered by factors such as discriminatory social norms, a lack of resources and difficult political contexts. Therefore, implementation is a long-term effort involving multiple partners which goes beyond the typical cycles of project-based work.

50. To capitalize on its broad range of work in the normative space, UN-Women should work towards planning longer-duration projects to support the implementation and monitoring of frameworks and policies. Mobilization of resources for implementation of these frameworks was highlighted as a key constraint in several evaluations, and UN-Women could intensify its efforts to advocate for continued financial allocations for implementation of these laws and policies which are critical for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Enhance measurement of impact and results tracking beyond inputs and outputs, particularly in areas of large investment and effort

51. UN-Women engaged in several capacity development and advocacy efforts and has reached a significant number of women, girls and allies through its capacity development efforts. However, the monitoring of these efforts was limited to tracking the number of stakeholders reached, with inadequate measurement of the medium- or long-term impact and transformational effect of these significant efforts. Evaluations were nearly unanimous in highlighting the need for UN-Women to make improvements in tracking and measuring the impact of its support, particularly capacity development, training and advocacy.

52. UN-Women should consider a systematic approach to impact assessments as this will provide relevant and credible evidence on what works, how, and the extent to which its efforts improve the lives of women and girls. Measurement of impact would also provide useful insights for scaling up or modifying key initiatives and identifying successful programme elements. UN-Women could use more evidenced-based methods to demonstrate its impact and also make key decisions on how to improve, scale up and enhance its efforts.

Focus on key strategic areas and work with partners to provide long-term support and build on sustainability measures

53. Given the short-term nature of many of the interventions and programmes supported by UN-Women, the Entity should work on developing exit strategies and long-term plans, particularly for key thematic and geographic areas. These measures could take the form of supporting fundraising efforts for longer engagements, fostering national champions and further developing the capacity of in-country organizations. Another concern was that the scale of some interventions was too small to have transformational effects: UN-Women could be more intentional in intensifying or consolidating its programmes and projects.

54. UN-Women could also enhance its impact by expanding strategic partnerships with United Nations and other organizations, including private companies, to support

joint programmes that harness their collective strengths. UN-Women has already demonstrated successful implementation of joint programmes and this could be an effective way for the Entity to extend its reach and improve value for money.

Develop holistic approaches with multilevel engagements involving a combination of advocacy, capacity-building, training and normative support

55. Multilevel engagements were effective in augmenting the effects of capacity-building and policy/normative support. UN-Women should consider further developing holistic approaches that support campaigns or capacity-building work with training and implementation of complementary programmes. Holistic approaches are critical to effect transformational, long-term change in entrenched attitudes and behaviours that run counter to promoting women's enjoyment of their human rights. For instance, awareness-raising campaigns could be supported with longer-term policy support strategies. Similarly, normative work could be supported with context-driven community initiatives.

Enhance the use of gender data, research and standardized needs assessments

56. UN-Women supported governments in strengthening gender data and advocated for the use of gender statistics to track the achievement and implementation of gender goals in the SDGs. UN-Women also produced and supported highly relevant research and works to strengthen national capacities in research and evidence on gender-responsive policies. The Entity could replicate these efforts in more countries, and improve the internal use of data and standardized needs assessment protocols for its programmes, projects and engagements.

IV. Annex 1: List of evaluations covered by the meta-synthesis

Region	Office/ Division	Title of Evaluation	Type	Year
Americas and the Caribbean	Bolivia	Alianzas estratégicas para la igualdad de género y el empoderamiento de las mujeres en Bolivia 2014-2017	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Guatemala	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2019
	Mexico	Final Evaluation of the Mexico Strategic Note, 2014-2019	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2019
	Bolivia	Final evaluation of the project, “Proyecto mejoramiento de la calidad de vida y empoderamiento de las mujeres del norte amazónico”	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Brazil	Regional mid-term evaluation of the Regional Programme Win-Win: Gender Equality Means Good Business	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Chile	Programa originarias: “Empoderamiento de las mujeres indígenas del norte de Chile para el desarrollo sostenible” 2016 - 2018	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Colombia	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2020
	El Salvador	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2020
	El Salvador	Mujeres y políticas municipales a favor de la igualdad en El Salvador	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Guatemala	Project final evaluation: Realizing the transformational effect of the Sepur Zarco reparation sentence to break the continuum of conflict and post-conflict related sexual and other forms of violence against women	Joint Evaluation	2020
	Mexico	Global Centre of Excellence on Gender Statistics (CEGS) Mid Term Evaluation	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean (Barbados)	Social Mobilization Programme to end Gender-Based Violence in the Caribbean (2014-2017 and 2018)	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Paraguay	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2020
	Regional Office for Americas and the Caribbean (Panama)	Regional Evaluation on Women’s Economic Empowerment (2015-2019)	Regional/ Thematic Evaluation	2020
	Arab States	Regional Office for Arab States (Egypt)	Formative Evaluation of Community and National Level Actions for Promoting Gender Equality and Engaging Men and Boys	Programme/ Project Evaluation
Jordan		UN-Women Programme Eid Bi Eid I & II Final Evaluation: Evaluation Report - Final	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
Jordan		Evaluation of the joint programme	Joint Evaluation	2019

Asia and the Pacific	Jordan	"Hemayati: Promoting women and girls health and well-being" Final evaluation of the National Strategy for Women and Situational Analysis of Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Jordan	Country-led Evaluation	2019
	Multi-Country Office for the Maghreb (Morocco)	Evaluation of the project "Appui à l'autonomisation économique des femmes à travers la promotion de la chaîne de valeur agro écologique pour une meilleure résilience au changement climatique"	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Multi-Country Office for the Maghreb (Morocco)	Evaluation of the project "Accès aux services judiciaires pour les femmes et enfants victimes de la traite humaine au Maroc"	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Palestine	Final Evaluation of UN Women Project "Advancing the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the oPt"	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Regional Office for Arab States (Egypt)	Mid-Term Evaluation of UN Women's Supporting Syrian Women's Engagement in the Syrian Political Process – Building a Homegrown Constituency for Peace Programme	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Bangladesh	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2019
	Nepal	Women's Economic Empowerment Programme Thematic Evaluation	Thematic Evaluation	2019
	Papua New Guinea	Evaluation of the 'Port Moresby: A Safe City for Women and Girls Programme'	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Papua New Guinea	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2019
	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Thailand)	Programme Presence Portfolio Evaluation in Asia and the Pacific	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2019
	Japan Liaison Office	Final evaluation of 'Raising Awareness of Gender Equality Among Young People' in Japan	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Multi-Country Office for India, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka	Final evaluation of "From Opportunities to Capacities: A Multi-Sectoral Approach to Enhancing Gender Responsive Governance"	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Pakistan	Economic Empowerment of Women Home-Based Workers and Excluded Groups in Pakistan (April 2017-August 2020)	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Multi-Country Office for India, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka	Final evaluation of "Addressing Sexual Bribery Experienced by Female Heads of Households, including Military Widows and War Widows in Sri Lanka to Enable Resilience and Sustained Peace"	Joint Evaluation	2020

	Timor-Leste	An Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to the Implementation of Timor-Leste National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2016-2020)	Thematic Evaluation	2020
	Viet Nam	Country Portfolio Evaluation + Audit	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2020
Cross-regional	Regional Office for Arab States (ASRO) and Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECARO)	Evaluation of the "Strengthening the Resilience of Syrian Women and Girls and Host Communities programme: EU MADAD Programme"	Regional/ Thematic Evaluation	2020
East and Southern Africa	Ethiopia	Joint Programme on Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (JP RWEE) in Ethiopia: End Evaluation Report	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Kenya	Final Evaluation Integrating Gender into Peace Support Operations in Eastern Africa	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Malawi	End of project evaluation for the Advancing and Sustaining Gender Based Governance Project in Malawi	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Malawi	Mid-term evaluation for the Women's Empowerment Programme	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Mozambique	Final Evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment Gaza Project	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Zimbabwe	Final Evaluation of the Gender, Peace and Security Programme in Zimbabwe	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Ethiopia	Mid-term evaluation of "Programme on Increased Participation and Representation of Women in Leadership in Ethiopia: The Road to Equitable Development"	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Ethiopia	Mid-term evaluation of African Girls Can Code Initiative	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Kenya	Evaluation Report of Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access & Protection in Crisis Response (LEAP): Promoting the Empowerment of Women and Girls within the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Kenya	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Malawi	End of Project Evaluation for the IBSA Project: Eliminating Child Marriages in Malawi and Zambia and Offering Scholarships to Child Marriage Survivors – Pilot Project	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Uganda	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2020
Europe and Central Asia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Final Evaluation of the project "Standards and Engagement for Ending Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina"	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019

	Georgia	United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality: Systematization of Final Results	Joint Evaluation	2019
	Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (Turkey)	Evaluation of the Serbia National Action Plan for Gender Equality	Country-led Evaluation	2019
	Ukraine	Mid-Term Evaluation: Enhancing Accountability for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in National Reforms, Peace and Security	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2020
	Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia	Final evaluation of the programme "Ending violence against women in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Implementing norms, changing minds"	Regional/ Thematic Evaluation	2020
	Georgia	Final evaluation of the project, "A Joint Action for Women's Economic Empowerment in Georgia"	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
	Kyrgyzstan	Final evaluation of the project, "Across Generation and Gender Borders - Communities Combatting Gender-Based Violence in Kyrgyzstan"	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2020
Independent Evaluation Service (IES)	IES	Corporate evaluation of UN-Women's contribution to Women's Political Participation and Leadership	Corporate Evaluation	2018
	IES	A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2017	Corporate Evaluation	2018
	IES	Meta-synthesis of UN Women Evaluations - 2017/2018	Corporate Evaluation	2019
	IES	Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to Governance and National Planning	Corporate Evaluation	2019
	IES	Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to Humanitarian Action	Corporate Evaluation	2019
	IES	Effectiveness and Efficiency Assessment of UN Women Flagship Programme Initiatives and Thematic Priorities of the Strategic Plan 2018-2021	Corporate Evaluation	2020
	IES	Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security	Corporate Evaluation	2020
	West and Central Africa	Liberia	Final Project Evaluation: "Inclusive Security: Nothing for Us Without Us"	Programme/ Project Evaluation
Mali		Evaluation de la Note Stratégique d'ONU Femme Mali 2014-2019	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2019
Sierra Leone		Final Evaluation of the Improving Women's Participation in Political	Programme/ Project Evaluation	2019

Headquarters		Processes as Peace building Ambassadors Project - Sierra Leone		
	Central African Republic	Evaluation finale du Projet Conjoint “Promotion de la participation politique et leadership de la femme dans la consolidation de la paix en République Centrafricaine”	Joint Evaluation	2020
	Nigeria	Country Portfolio Evaluation	Country Portfolio Evaluation	2020
	Fund for Gender Equality	Independent Global Programme Evaluation of the Fund for Gender Equality, 2009-2017	Global Evaluation	2018
	Policy Division	Final Evaluation of the Knowledge Gateway on Women’s Economic Empowerment Project (Empower Women)	Global Evaluation	2018

V. Annex 2: Types of UN-Women support

Type of support/functions	Description
Intergovernmental normative support	Assist governments and stakeholders to comply with and assess progress in implementation of global norms and standards on gender equality and women’s empowerment. For example, support for Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) preparations and follow-up, or United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reporting would fall into this category. Support for comprehensive national-level reviews of implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing+25) would also fall into this category.
Integrated normative support (<i>in the context of operational activities</i>)	Integrated normative support for implementation, monitoring and reporting on global agreements, norms and standards (translate global norms and standards into national frameworks, including laws, policies and programmes, building on existing evidence, best practices and latest policy knowledge).
Integrated policy advice	Support the efforts of countries to embed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national and local plans and budgets.
Capacity development and technical assistance	While capacity development may have a broader definition encompassing other types of support, it should be understood in this context as activities that aim to directly strengthen national capacities in support of results in specific thematic areas through training, learning-focused workshops, support for long-term learning, development of national expertise, etc.
Advocacy and social mobilization	Drive public and/or political support for gender equality and women’s empowerment or specific aspects thereof, including by raising awareness, building alliances,

	mobilizing supportive constituencies and engaging with less committed actors.
United Nations system coordination	Coalesce the United Nations system to support the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment as part of their activities through accountability, gender mainstreaming, joint programming and institutional strengthening for gender equality and women's empowerment.

Source: UN-Women Annual Work Plan Guidance Note 2019.