

Independent Evaluation Service (IES) | Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS)

CORPORATE THEMATIC EVALUATION OF

UN-Women's support to women's political participation: Insights from the field

Photo: UN Women/Ganganjit Singh

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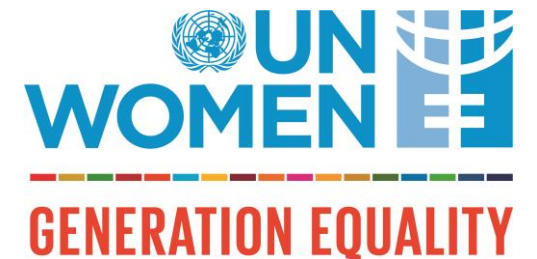




Photo: UN Photo/Leila Thiam

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1 | EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

UN-Women's support to women's political participation: Insights from the field

Scope of the evaluation

- Impact, effectiveness, relevance, coherence and sustainability of UN-Women's support to women's political participation at the country level
- Enabling factors/bottlenecks, unintended (positive/negative) consequences, contribution of global/regional support, alignment with key partners
- UN-Women's integrated mandate, integration of equity considerations, and approach to sustainability



Geographical scope and timeframe

- UN-Women's programming across all six regions through a representative sample of Country Offices
- Evaluation time frame: January 2018–June 2023
 - Summative assessment of results achieved during UN-Women's SP 2018–2021
 - Exploration of insights to support implementation of UN-Women's SP 2022–2025



Data collection methods

- Theory based approach, including development of an evaluation framework to map changes in key outcomes and impact across various stages of women's entry into the political sphere
- Primary and secondary data
- Comprehensive stakeholder mapping exercise



2 | KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1

In what ways has UN-Women's support been tailored to the local political context?

2

What is the impact of UN-Women's support to women's political participation at country level?

3

How well does UN-Women work with its partners (UN and others) on the ground?

4

How effectively is UN-Women's triple mandate (normative, UN system coordination, operational) leveraged in support of achieving results at country level?

5

What aspects of equity are targeted by UN-Women's interventions (leave no one behind and gender equality)?

6

What is UN-Women's approach to safeguarding the sustainability of its impact and efforts in this area?

3 | DATA COLLECTION

224

Stakeholder interviews

12

Country case studies

+ 500

Documents reviewed

2

Online surveys

408

Survey respondents



Desk review

and synthesis; portfolio analysis of UN-Women's annual work plans, strategic notes, evaluations, project and programme documents, reports, etc.



Stakeholder interviews

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions
(UN-Women personnel at country, region, and headquarters levels; UN agencies; women political aspirants and leaders; donors; implementing partners; government; CSOs and international/regional organizations)

(N= 183 female, 41 male)



Online surveys

UN-Women personnel
(57 respondents ; 28 per cent response rate)

Women political aspirants and leaders
(351 respondents ; 8 per cent response rate)



Country case studies

Brazil
Colombia
Central African Republic
Kenya*
Kyrgyzstan
Lebanon
Liberia
Moldova*
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
Tanzania
Zimbabwe*

* in-person country visits

4 | CONCLUSIONS BY WORKSTREAM

Design and Approach Workstream

- Relevance of UN-Women's approach to women's political participation
- Extent to which strategies were tailored to local political contexts
- UN-Women's approach to sustainability in different contexts



Delivery Workstream

- Coherence of UN-Women's partnerships with UN and non-UN partners
- Insights on leveraging UN-Women's integrated mandate at the country level
- Aspects of equity (leaving no one behind) targeted by UN-Women's interventions



Performance Workstream

- Impact of UN-Women's support to women's political participation
- Contextualization of real-world effects and contributions in driving positive changes



CONCLUSION

1



The design and approach of UN-Women's work allowed for adaptation to country contexts, while remaining strategically focused on accelerators of women's political participation.

UN-Women has aligned well with contextual drivers and worked with political actors to build networks of influence. As programmes scale efforts to bring women into politics, particularly at the subnational level, issues arise of how to effectively respond to growing needs.

CONCLUSION

2

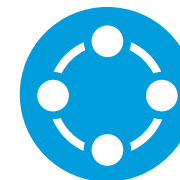


There was some evidence that knowledge and learning within UN-Women's programmes at country level worked well to enable consolidation and rapid implementation of successful practices and approaches.

However, further strengthening of tools to measure progress will help to strengthen programme responsiveness and engage donors in critical areas of learning.

CONCLUSION

3



Resistance to women's political participation remains a salient issue in many countries, requiring comprehensive and sustained efforts to preserve gains.

UN-Women's approach at country level would benefit from developing longer-term, strategic programming that goes beyond typical election cycle-based initiatives.

CONCLUSION

4

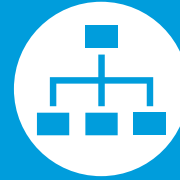


Partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders across government, women's networks, civil society organizations and others have been critical to support various initiatives related to women's political participation.

Partnerships between UN agencies at the country level have enabled mainstreaming of women's political participation into wider electoral efforts and partners recognize UN-Women's value add, and flexible ways of working. While engagement with new partners in the context of social norms change and working at subnational levels will enable reach and access, potential risks related to these partnerships should continue to be assessed.

CONCLUSION

5



At the global level, UN-Women's triple mandate has been leveraged in support of advancing women's political participation.

While the Entity's normative and operational mandates were leveraged concurrently across most countries, there is room to strengthen the coordination role at the country level, particularly in gender mainstreaming across UN programming on political participation.

CONCLUSION

6



UN-Women has worked to ensure that the 'leave no one behind' principle and the needs of marginalized groups were included in its programming by improving access to resources such as training and building more equitable representation.

While committed to the principle of equity, less well-funded programmes would benefit from further guidance on the trade-offs between working inclusively versus reaching more women at scale.

CONCLUSION

7



UN-Women's programmes have contributed to positive impacts on the legal and policy environment, and movement-building and capacity-building across various contexts.

Legal reform, particularly legislated quotas, have been key drivers of higher numbers of women in political positions. Evidence from case studies showed that in some countries this was translating into gender-responsive policymaking. However, there was also evidence of gains stagnating or reversing in other countries, driven by a number of factors.

CONCLUSION

8



While progress has been made in areas of legal and policy reforms, support to women's participation from political parties remains a key challenge.

CONCLUSION

9



Support from headquarters was well-tailored to country-level needs and contributed to the effectiveness of programmes.

Technical support was responsive, learning was accessible and work on data and in developing standard models (e.g. for training) were also widely applied. However, regional-level collaboration could be strengthened in some areas.

5 | RECOMMENDATIONS

1



UN-Women should continue to **address key barriers to women's political participation**, while including a focus on persistent constraints and forms of backlash, such as violence against women in politics.

2



UN-Women should **strengthen its advocacy and convening role** by providing further guidance on navigating and communicating with diverse coalitions of partners in support of women's political participation.

3



UN-Women should aim to **develop strategic and long-term programmes** to support women's political participation at the country level.

4



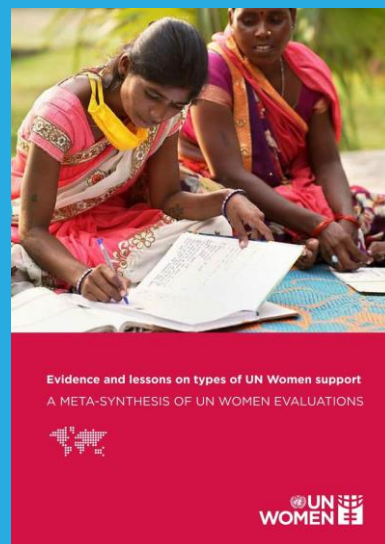
UN-Women should **strengthen guidance on effectively mainstreaming considerations of leave no one behind** into women's political participation, particularly as programmes scale and work with new partnerships for social norms change.

5



UN-Women should **enhance measurement of key results** on women's political participation to better contextualize and demonstrate the impact of its work at country level.

THANK YOU



www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/accountability/evaluation/corporate-evaluations