

TRANSFORM



The gender mainstreaming issue

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Dear Readers,

Gender policies can potentially be strategic in mainstreaming gender equality in United Nations entities. But in practice, how have they performed? What are the key lessons learned and good practices in mainstreaming gender equality in UN entities? And, most importantly, what else should be done to enhance gender mainstreaming?

The 5th issue of *Transform*, the UN Women's Independent Evaluation Office magazine, aims to address those questions by making more accessible the findings from the recently concluded "Review of corporate gender equality evaluations in the UN system".

This review, the first of its kind, captured validated learning on gender mainstreaming within the UN system from 17 external corporate gender equality evaluations completed between 2006 and 2014.

To enhance relevance and utility of the information, the findings are organized around the 6 policy areas of the UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

The review findings may be used by UN entities to enhance gender equality policies, improve performance against the UN-SWAP framework, and improve corporate gender equality evaluation practice. More specifically, they can be used to inform UN Women efforts to support performance against the UN-SWAP process and to refine the UN-SWAP framework in its next cycle. The findings may also be useful to inform any baseline assessment of the pre- UN-SWAP situation for an evaluation of the UN-SWAP.

The review was led by UN Women, in consultation with UN Evaluation Group (UNEG), EvalPartners and EvalGender+. I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to the colleagues from UN Women, UNEG, EvalPartners, EvalGender+ who contributed and participated in this process with their time.

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Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.

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Promoting validated good practices and lessons from gender mainstreaming in the UN system



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Gender mainstreaming in the UN system

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ON THE COVER: Henna Virkkunen, Member of European Parliament (EPP) from Finland during an interview conducted by Empowerwomen.org about best practices for strengthening economic empowerment of women.



A WIDE VIEW OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING AT WHICH MEMBERS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UN WOMEN, A NEW UN ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT. SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON (ON SCREENS) ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY.

Why a review of corporate gender equality evaluations in the UN system?

This review of corporate gender equality evaluations in the UN system aims to inform the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review by providing evidence on what works and what does not work in mainstreaming gender equality in UN entities.

Its objective is to analyse the results of the corporate gender equality evaluations of UN entities completed in 2006–2014, the period between the endorsement of the Chief Executive Board system-wide policy on gender equality and prior to the roll-out of the UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). It is an effort to ensure that validated learning from the past is captured to support even further progress being made by the UN system in gender equality.

Corporate gender equality evaluations are those evaluations that both meet the UN Evaluation Group definition for evaluation and have as their primary objective the assessment of an entity's gender mainstreaming performance at all levels,

usually focused on the implementation of that entity's gender equality policy, strategy or plan. By synthesizing the learning, good practices and challenges validated within such evaluations, the insights can enable the UN system to move forward in a more coherent manner to continue improving practice.

This review acknowledges that there has been important progress on gender mainstreaming by UN entities led by the introduction of the UN-SWAP that is not reflected in these insights. The UN-SWAP technical notes, UN-SWAP annual reports and other documents provide many good examples and report much progress made. However, these have not yet been validated by external and independent evaluation.

Primary objective: Extract externally validated learning and good practices in achieving gender equality institutional results by UN entities prior to the implementation of the UN-SWAP.

Other objectives:

- Identify gaps and challenges in gender mainstream practice
- Contribute to establishing the baseline for the UN-SWAP for future evaluations
- Identify areas for refinement or revision for the UN-SWAP
- Test the UN-SWAP as an analytical framework
- Inform methodologies for future corporate gender evaluations

Use: The findings are expected to be used by UN entities to enhance gender equality policies, improve performance against the UN-SWAP framework and improve corporate gender equality evaluation practice. More specifically, the findings will be used to inform UN Women's efforts to support performance as measured against the UN-SWAP process.



IN FOCUS

Gender mainstreaming in the UN system

Mandate Gender mainstreaming, as a strategic approach for achieving the goal of gender equality, has been mandated in the UN system since:

- The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action
- The 1997/2 agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council
- The 2006 Chief Executives Board System-wide Policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women (CEB/2006/2)
- The 2012 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review which resulted in General Assembly Resolution 67/226 requesting the UN system to strengthen gender-responsive evaluation
- Subsequent intergovernmental resolutions and decisions.

Definition It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetrated.

Ultimate goal Achieve gender equality.

The year 2015 will see the adoption of a post-2015 development agenda that includes strengthening of global efforts to advance gender equality. The proposed Sustainable Development Goals not only include the stand-alone Goal 5 on gender equality, but these issues are also considered cross-cutting within all the goals.

The United Nations has a system-wide mandate to mainstream gender in all of its work. Since 2006, the Chief Executives Board System-wide Policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women provides a means of furthering the goal

JUNE ZEITLIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION, ADDRESSED CORRESPONDENTS ABOUT THE RESPONSE OF WOMEN'S GROUPS TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON UN SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE, AT UN HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK.



DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL JAN ELIASSON ADDRESSES THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S SECOND COMMITTEE AT ITS MEETING ON THE QUADRENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REVIEW OF UN SYSTEM OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT.

UN-SWAP

UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

of gender equality within the policies and programmes of the UN system, and implementing the Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2. Since then, several UN entities have developed policies, or revised existing ones, on gender equality that use gender mainstreaming as the major strategy for achieving their goals. At the corporate level, since 2012, gender mainstreaming is undertaken through the UN-SWAP. At the country level, this is done in the specific context of UN-supported planning frameworks such as the UN Development Assistance Framework.

At the same time, the UN system is also taking steps to implement the UN General Assembly resolution on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, which called for UN entities to work collaboratively to enhance gender mainstreaming within the UN system. The resolution noted the importance of the work of UN Women to promote more effective and coherent gender mainstreaming across the United Nations and the development of the UN-SWAP.

 **UN-SWAP**
<http://bit.ly/unswap>

 **1995 BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION**
<http://bit.ly/1995beijing>

 **1997 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**
<http://bit.ly/1997ecosoc>

 **2006 SYSTEM-WIDE POLICY ON GENDER**
<http://bit.ly/2006cebs>

 **2012 QUADRENNIAL POLICY REVIEW**
<http://bit.ly/2012policyreview>



INSIGHTS FROM THE PAST TO INFORM THE FUTURE

PRE UN-SWAP: What have we learned from evaluations?

SIX POLICY AREAS OF UN-SWAP

Key insights around the six policy areas of the UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP): accountability, results-based management, oversight, human and financial resources, capacity development and coherence, knowledge and information management.



WOMEN FROM ALL OVER CÔTE D'IVOIRE GATHER TO CELEBRATE
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT THE PALAIS DE LA CULTURE IN ABIDJAN.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Learning to be accountable to gender policies

INSIGHT 1**UN entities should conceptually and operationally link gender equality policies to corporate strategic plans.**

Twelve evaluations within the portfolio assessed entity gender equality policies (in place for 5 to 10 years at the time of evaluation). The evaluations found that these policies could have increased relevance and effectiveness if they articulated the conceptual and operational linkages between the gender equality policy and the corporate strategic plan. By doing so, gender equality policies would have benefited from the increased visibility and accountability provided by planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting processes for the corporate strategic plans.

Keys to help link gender equality policies and corporate strategic plans:

- Align time frames and conceptualization process
- Assess location and roles of gender units within entities for barriers to entry points

INSIGHT 2**Policies with clearly articulated links between gender equality and the entity's overall development results strengthen staff perceptions of the relevance of gender mainstreaming.**

Staff perception of the relevance of gender mainstreaming to their entity's mandate, a necessary first step in achieving buy-in for any organizational strategy, was enhanced when gender equality policies made reference to gender equality in specific terms connected to the mandate (e.g., access to microcredit) as opposed to generic terms (e.g., empowerment, access to resources) and the use of overly technical language. However, relevance for staff was more significantly strengthened when the connections between gender equality results and the development results an entity aimed to achieve were made explicit within its gender equality policy.



UN WOMEN/J. CARRIER

INSIGHT 3**Explicit theories of change and improved results logic strengthen implementation.**

Although gender equality policies included clearly articulated goals, none included an explicit theory of change that defined the preconditions necessary for achieving gender equality policy goals by mapping the causal linkages between short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes. An articulation of the expected change process could have supported the selection of intervention types, strategies and activities to be undertaken to achieve goals. This likely limited the ability to manage for results and monitoring and reporting on progress towards goals.

INSIGHT 4**Establishing or, where already existing, strengthening gender-responsive performance management systems enhances accountability.**

Four evaluations assessed gender-responsive performance management systems of entities and all found this to be a key area for improvement. Only one entity had developed and implemented a competency-based performance criteria system for gender mainstreaming targeting senior managers. Overall, responsibilities and key results related to gender equality were missing from staff workplans at all levels, with the exception of gender specialists or advisers. A few entities included references to general values such as respect for gender equality and human rights within job descriptions. There was also evidence of formal commitments by senior managers to gender parity in staffing, but these had not been in place long enough at the time of evaluation to assess effectiveness. There was no evidence of incentive systems for staff performance on gender equality.

RESULTS MANAGEMENT

Picking up lessons for integrating gender in planning, monitoring and reporting

INSIGHT 5

Gender analysis should be integrated in central strategic planning documents and country programme documents.

Six entities incorporated gender analysis within corporate strategic planning documents, although the extent of incorporation varied: two entities incorporated gender analysis to support all strategic plan goals; two entities integrated gender analysis to support specific gender equality goals; and two entities integrated gender analysis within specific programme priorities included in strategic plans. At the country level, only two entities were reported to include gender analysis in country programme documents; five entities did not include such an analysis; and the evaluations of another five entities were not explicit enough to make a determination.

INSIGHT 6

Linking the entity's monitoring and reporting data on gender equality to its results management system strengthens the quality of that data.

Strong overall results management systems within entities translate to more robust management for gender equality results. Likewise, entity results management systems that faced commonly documented issues (e.g., indicators and targets that are not measurable and meaningful, weak outcome statements and limited capacity to measure them, and weak connections or logical breaks in results hierarchies, etc.) also faced challenges in managing for gender equality results. This affected not only the quality of results planning within the gender equality policies, but also that of entity central or country-level planning for gender equality results. In the case of two entities, gender units were able to successfully 'piggy-back' on initiatives to strengthen overall results management systems to ensure that management towards gender equality results was also strengthened.

INSIGHT 7

Monitoring and reporting should be focused at the outcome level, in addition to the activity and output levels.

Seven evaluations provided information on gender equality results focused on the activity or output level, with little (or no) reporting on progress towards outcome-level results or outcome differences based on gender. Only one entity was found to systematically include both output and outcome indicators on gender equality within its results and impact monitoring system. The fact that there is generally more focus on gender analysis at the design stage, and less attention paid to gender-responsive implementation, monitoring and reporting may have contributed to this scenario. The evidence also points to gaps in both monitoring and reporting systems for gender equality results, as well as to issues related to actual implementation.



ON THE FIRST DAY OF HER VISIT TO INDIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA PARTICIPATES IN AN INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION WITH WOMEN, GIRLS AND BOYS ABOUT THE DELHI SAFE CITY PROGRAMME HOSTED BY UN WOMEN'S NGO PARTNER JAGORI.

OVERSIGHT

The power of oversight for gender equality

INSIGHT 8

Though evaluations have the potential to act as credible sources of information on gender equality results at the outcome and impact level, we are not yet using them that way.

Evaluations have an important role to play in bringing forth credible information on entity efforts towards gender mainstreaming for learning, decision-making and accountability. Six of the more recent evaluations in the portfolio assessed the gender-responsiveness of entity evaluations. As with monitoring and reporting, evaluations assessed and reported on the activities and processes related to gender mainstreaming, with less focus—perhaps due to evaluability issues—on the assessment of gender equality outcomes or impacts (or lack thereof).

INSIGHT 9

Evaluations should improve the analysis of linkages between gender equality performance results and overall development results.

While gender equality institutional results (or institutional results on gender mainstreaming) are undoubtedly important as results in their own right, they can also play an important role in improving entity effectiveness towards gender equality development results or even development results more broadly. Yet, there was limited information available to support this assumption or understand the nature or extent of such linkages or how such linkages could be forged or strengthened. Only a handful of evaluations were able to provide information or examples of correlations or direct contributions to development results from effective gender mainstreaming. These included the three evaluations of UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations missions.

EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS OF ACTIVISTS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AROUND THE WORLD COME TO NEW YORK TO TAKE PART IN THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, THE GLOBAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODY EXCLUSIVELY DEDICATED TO THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. MORE THAN 4,400 CAME FOR THE 59TH SESSION IN MARCH 2015. ELIZABETH TANG, GENERAL SECRETARY AT THE INTERNATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS FEDERATION FROM HONG KONG, HOPES THAT THROUGH CSW "GOVERNMENT SHALL BE ENCOURAGED TO PROTECT WOMEN RIGHTS, ESPECIALLY WOMEN AT GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL."



UN WOMEN/RYAN BROWN

INSIGHT 10

Participatory gender audits increase understanding and commitment to gender equality.

The participatory gender-responsive audit encourages dialogue and reflection within an organization through a self-assessment approach that examines both objective data and perceptions of staff, management and clients in order to share good practices identified in promoting gender equality, as well as challenges and recommendations. Only three entities in the portfolio were found to have conducted PGAs; however, when conducted, they were found to support improved gender mainstreaming performance.

INSIGHT 11

Programme review criteria should ensure the incorporation of specific gender equality criteria.

The review found that five entities' programme review processes included some level of attention to gender equality dimensions. However, gender equality-specific criteria were found to be largely missing from programme review processes of entities. This was attributed to the perception that corrective measures were not feasible at that stage given the cost and time required to conduct and incorporate sufficient gender analysis, especially if this was a significant weakness at the design stage. Donor requirements to integrate gender equality dimensions within designs were cited as an incentive factor for some entities, as was early support by gender units/advisers for design processes.

HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES**Climbing the ladder****INSIGHT 12**

Increased capacity of gender architectures provides more consistent and meaningful support to gender mainstreaming efforts.

The gender architecture of an entity is normally made up of a centrally located gender unit, field-based or programme-based advisers, and a gender focal point network. The central gender unit is normally responsible for developing entity gender policies and providing specialized technical assistance for its implementation. The gender focal point network normally consists of non-gender experts for whom gender equality is not a main responsibility.

The terms of reference for gender focal point networks and individual gender focal points were rarely formalized and this created uncertainty about expected roles and responsibilities for achieving results. Gender focal point networks were also predominated by junior staff members and/or staff who were already responsible for full job descriptions/work plans that were not scaled back once they were appointed as a gender focal point. This insight was consistent over time in most evaluations, indicating that the issue continued to persist. In addition, costs related to the effective functioning of gender focal point networks were normally not reflected in budget allocation decisions or financial resource tracking systems.

INSIGHT 13

Relatively small investments to establish field-based gender architecture within UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations peacekeeping missions has generated significant progress towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women development results.

All three evaluations of UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations peacekeeping missions provided evidence that investment in field-based gender units was effective in generating development results on gender equality. These gender units worked closely with emerging political processes and local civil society organizations to strengthen national gender architectures, support women candidates for election, influence constitutions and policies to integrate gender equality issues, and support policing capacity to address family violence and violence against women and girls. Gender units' partnerships with local women's movements, high-level advocacy and expertise from the gender unit in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations were all found to be important factors for success. However, the sustainability of the gains was found to have diminished when UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations missions were discontinued and transition to the UN development system was completed.

**INSIGHT 14**

UN entities show progress towards gender parity over time, but the factors that support or hinder their achievement were not assessed.

Seven evaluations assessed gender parity in staffing, and all but one found progress was made over time. However, analysis across entities was challenged by the fact that the evaluations assessed parity using other classifications of posts than those required by the Secretary-General's Annual Report on Improvements in the Status of Women in the UN System. Missing from the analysis of gender parity was an assessment of the factors that support gender parity. Only one evaluation found that the expansion and use of family-friendly and anti-harassment policies and the inclusion of gender equality in job descriptions were factors that seemed to support gender parity. Likewise, analysis of the barriers to achieving gender parity was missing from all but one evaluation, which found attrition rates were higher for women (particularly young professional women) than men. However, the analysis did not go further to explore how/if higher attrition rates for younger women affected the availability of qualified women applicants for senior management or higher-level professional positions.

INSIGHT 15

UN entities established supportive policies to promote gender equality, but organizational culture limited their implementation and use.

Supportive policies include, but are not limited to, hiring and promotion policies, facilitative policies (paternity, maternity, adoption, parental leave, etc.), prevention of harassment policies (including policies for the prevention of sexual harassment), and flexible working arrangements (e.g., flexitime and home-based work policies). The evaluations found that there was a gap between establishing policies and promoting their actual implementation, with two main barriers cited. First, there was not yet buy-in by supervisors on the benefits of these policies. Second, staff themselves did not take advantage of such policies because they felt they would have to work harder to manage work-life balance or that work demands would be difficult to schedule into different working arrangements. For example, individuals who opted to shift from full-time to part-time work (with reduced pay) to meet family obligations were still expected to complete a full-time workload within reduced hours. No evidence was found of plans having been made for how the reduced workload of individuals would be redistributed or addressed, also harming work quality.

HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

GULALAI ISMAIL, FOUNDER OF AWARE GIRLS, PAKISTAN



EMPOWERWOMEN.ORG / EMAD KARIM

INSIGHT 16

Clear financial benchmarks enhance investment in gender equality.

Financial benchmarks act as both drivers of accountability and guidance for ensuring at least a minimum budget allocation required to successfully undertake an initiative or strategy. They are likely to be most effective when they have been established based on evidence and practice. Yet, financial benchmarking for allocating resources for gender equality was identified as a major gap within the portfolio reviewed.

The analysis of the portfolio did provide some information to support the establishment of future gender equality financial benchmarks. At the system-wide level, a financial benchmark for gender equality has been in place since the 2010 Secretary-General's report on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding (A/65/354-S/2010/466), which committed the United Nations to allocate at least 15 per cent of UN managed funds in support of peacebuilding to projects that had the principal objective of addressing women's specific needs, advancing gender equality or empowering women. One entity had recommended a 20 per cent allocation of global, regional and country programme budgets for its efforts to achieve gender equality in 1996, but it was rescinded in 2000 due to reports of its uneven application. Another entity allocated approximately 13 per cent of field budget to programmes related to gender equality, which was considered inadequate given its mandate.

INSIGHT 17

Financial tracking systems for gender equality should be fully developed to enhance effectiveness.

A robust system for tracking gender equality financial information is also needed as it provides impetus and accountability for meeting benchmarks by capturing information on both budget allocations and actual expenditures. The most commonly used tools for tracking financial resources for gender equality are gender markers and financial coding. Nine entities were reported to use a gender marker, but only four evaluations actually analysed the use of the tool in detail. The findings indicated issues related to the consistent and systematic use of gender markers, and the reliability of the data provided—possibly due to the fact that the use of the gender marker at that time was usually optional.

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CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Capacitating gender equality

INSIGHT 18**Capacity assessments make capacity development initiatives more effective.**

There was no evidence that any entity in the portfolio had undertaken a staff capacity assessment on gender equality or gender mainstreaming. Such an assessment could have provided key information on the level and extent of capacity development needs to effectively implement gender mainstreaming. Staff surveys conducted as part of evaluation processes found ample support for gender equality and gender mainstreaming, but a large proportion of staff reported they did not feel confident in applying gender mainstreaming in their work—indicating that capacity development initiatives were much needed. Without the benefit of a capacity assessment, however, entities were limited in their ability to develop an overall strategy to meet staff needs and to make strategic decisions on which staff/levels to target and how.

INSIGHT 19**Capacity development initiatives must be assessed to ensure relevance and effectiveness.**

Although there was evidence of significant past investments in gender training among six of the entities evaluated, only a minority of staff surveyed at the time of the evaluations had received any training on gender equality, gender mainstreaming or gender analysis. Funding was identified as a barrier for planning gender-related capacity development initiatives. However, there were also missed opportunities to integrate gender equality issues effectively in non-gender-specific capacity development initiatives.

There appeared to be no systematic collection of feedback on the relevance or effectiveness of the capacity development initiatives undertaken to assess the level of retention of information or the ability to apply new skills. However, relevance of capacity development initiatives would likely improve with adaptation and tailoring to job descriptions. For example, an important distinction between the knowledge required to conduct gender analysis (normally undertaken by gender specialists) and the knowledge required to influence existing norms and relations in favour of greater gender equality (likely adequate for programme managers) was also raised.

INSIGHT 20**Tailored on-the-job learning should complement formal training initiatives.**

Variation in capacity development methods was welcomed by staff as training modules were not always the most effective option. For country and regional staff, formal gender mainstreaming training was considered less important than providing access to mentoring and specialized advice when needed, or even opportunities to discuss gender mainstreaming issues with colleagues. One entity's regional gender advisers systematically supported non-gender specialist programme staff in developing gender mainstreaming strategies and action plans at appropriate moments in the programme cycle. As with formal training initiatives, these capacity development initiatives were also not systematically assessed by evaluations, despite their promise for building staff capacity on gender mainstreaming.

SCENES FROM THE MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE MEETINGS HELD ON 10 MARCH 2015 AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS. THE MEETINGS, PART OF THE 59TH SESSION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, WERE CONVENED TO DISCUSS PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE ACTION TO REALIZE GENDER EQUALITY, THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS.



COHERENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**Opportunities to grow stronger****INSIGHT 21**

UN entities developed a number of knowledge management and communication products, but no formal knowledge management strategies were in place and the use of products was not systematically tracked.

Eight evaluations reported on entities' knowledge management and communication on gender equality issues. Entities were reported to have produced a range of publications, tools and checklists, established communities of practice and conducted knowledge management workshops. However, these were not developed within or guided by an overall knowledge management strategy on gender equality. Although several of the evaluations noted that the degree to which gender-related publications, tools or websites were used was an important indicator of the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming, no systematic tracking of use was undertaken.

Two good practices strengthened knowledge-generation and communication:

- Active gender focal point networks that met regularly to share experiences and practices
- Effective collaboration between gender units and communications units, even when communication plans are not in place

INSIGHT 22

Future evaluation should better capture efforts to increase coherence.

Although system-wide policies and guidance on gender equality were referenced, the evaluations did not systematically assess coherence. Some limited examples were reported of in-country collaboration with other UN entities in gender theme groups, in relation to work on the gender dimensions of the UN Development Assistance Framework and/or on specific policy areas such as gender-based violence. Three entities with complementary mandates were also found to be actively collaborating on advocacy, communication and programming in relation to gender equality issues. The Inter-Agency Network for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality and the UN-SWAP and UN-SWAP Focal Points Network (among the more recent evaluations) were viewed positively as sources of information and inspiration. They were considered a good practice for promoting coherence on gender equality.

OTHER INSIGHTS

Engendering humanitarian settings and facilitating a rights-based approach



INSIGHT 23

Gender mainstreaming performance was lower in humanitarian settings.

Evaluations that assessed humanitarian work found that it lagged behind development work in mainstreaming gender equality, even within the same entity. Guidelines for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian contexts exist (Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Policy and Gender Marker) and UN entities have collaborated to provide operational support to gender mainstreaming in humanitarian operations, e.g., funding for the Gender Capacity Standby Project that maintains a pool of gender advisers dispatched for short and medium term deployments. Yet, the evaluations noted that strategies for addressing gender issues in emergency response and disaster preparedness were missing and institutional commitment, staff capacity, accountability and the allocation of dedicated human and financial resources needed to be strengthened.

INSIGHT 24

UN entities with a strong rights-based approach orientation are more effective in implementing the entity's gender equality policy.

Five evaluations found a correlation between a strong rights-based approach orientation within entities and more effective gender mainstreaming. The integration of gender equality appeared to be more accepted internally given that it is also at the core of the human rights-based approach.

Strategies for addressing gender issues in emergency response and disaster preparedness must be strengthened



POST UN-SWAP: The way forward

Gender mainstreaming is a complex and relatively new undertaking with knowledge about what needs to be done (and how to do it) rapidly evolving.

Gender mainstreaming is a complex and relatively new undertaking with knowledge about what needs to be done (and how to do it) rapidly evolving. Although this review is based on evaluations dating from the pre UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) period, it has generated insights or validated current understanding about mainstreaming gender equality that will be useful for the UN system, UN-SWAP reporting entities, UN Women and the UN Evaluation Group.

The insights provide both evidence of good practice in gender mainstreaming and challenges that are meant to inform further discussion, the development of new guidance and tools, and catalyse further actions to improve system-wide gender mainstreaming. They also largely validate the UN-SWAP performance indicators, which successfully targeted the key gaps and challenges for gender mainstreaming.

As the recent UN-SWAP reporting has shown further progress in many areas, this momentum needs to be maintained and increased to raise the bar for gender mainstreaming. As the UN-SWAP process is further institutionalized in its third year of reporting, there has been a shift from raising awareness on the process and content, to developing more guidance and tools to support entities in improving performance on all indicators. Dedicated workshops are held where challenges are discussed, support is provided and the peer review mechanism is also taking hold with three entities conducting a peer review of the UN-SWAP reporting in 2014 and another two entities planning a peer review for 2015.

Based on the insights of this review, and in the context of the limitations outlined, some conclusions and potential ways forward are provided below to further stimulate discussion and action. It is hoped that these will support the multitude of efforts already under way.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability on the horizon: Reviews to support improvement

CONCLUSION 1

Gender equality policies must be further grounded and contextualized within UN entity mandates and strategic planning documents at the corporate and country level to increase relevance, management for results and effective implementation.

Strong gender equality policies, which act as frameworks for an entity's corporate gender mainstreaming implementation, are essential for improving gender mainstreaming performance. Yet, the insights indicate that gender equality policies need to be further grounded and contextualized within entity mandates and strategic planning documents at the corporate and country level to increase relevance, management for results and effective implementation. Creating more synergies and linkages between gender equality policies and corporate strategic plans is one avenue for doing so. A more explicit role for gender units in corporate planning processes and alignment of the development processes for both documents would support this endeavour. At the country level, more information is needed to understand the extent to which gender equality policies are integrated within country programme documents and how to further strengthen such integration given the potentially large benefits for gender equality development results.

Conversely, the insights also demonstrate scope for improving the quality of gender equality policies. A clear articulation of the importance of gender mainstreaming for achieving an entity's mandate and expected development results in language that resonates with entity staff appears crucial for increasing relevance and buy-in for its implementation by staff. The development of explicit theories of change and stronger results frameworks would also support implementation towards goals and improve monitoring and reporting. Improved connections with corporate strategic plans and country programme documents could also improve reporting on policy implementation if, as a result, this is captured more robustly within entity annual reporting processes.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN Women should review the system-wide guidance on gender equality policies and update it in light of the insights of this report.

UN PHOTO/DEVRA BERKOWITZ



PARTICIPANTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS, HELD IN NEW YORK CITY, INCLUDING PHUMZILE MLAMBO-NGCUKA (FRONT, SECOND FROM RIGHT), EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UN ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN (UN WOMEN); AND MUNA RIHANI AL-NASSER (FROM, SECOND FROM LEFT), CHAIR OF THE UNITED NATIONS WOMEN FOR PEACE ASSOCIATION.

CONCLUSION 2

Gender-responsive performance management systems must be further developed and assessed for effectiveness.

Given the limited evidence available on performance management systems on gender equality, an assessment of the effectiveness of such systems within UN entities is needed. The supporting documentation collected for this review indicated that there have been more recent efforts related to the development and implementation of performance criteria and incentive systems that have not been captured by evaluation; thus, the possibility for useful learning from such an assessment is high. Examples on how to tailor such systems according to job descriptions and responsibilities, rather than adopting a generic approach, would be particularly useful.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN Women should conduct a review of UN entity gender-responsive performance management systems to enhance learning and practice in this area and further develop or refine guidance based on the results.

UN-SWAP

In the area of gender mainstreaming and accountability, it has coalesced



62 UN entities

Around



15 Commonly-agreed performance indicators

Clustered around



6 Broad functional areas

Network of more than



300 UN-SWAP/gender focal points across UN entities

Achieved progress on



14 of 15 UN-SWAP indicators

Source: Data provided by the UN System Coordination Division of the UN Women Strategic Partnerships, Coordination & Intergovernmental Support Bureau through UN-SWAP reporting

RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Looking ahead

CONCLUSION 3

UN entities must further strengthen inclusion of gender analysis within both corporate and country-level strategic planning documents.

Systematic inclusion of robust gender analysis is needed to support strategic planning at both the corporate and country level. There was limited evidence about the level of integration of gender analysis in country programme documents where it is important, given the link to development results. Further assessment of the level and quality of gender analysis within strategic planning documents and strengthening the capacity of staff to undertake gender analysis can support improved performance in this area.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN entities should strengthen the level and quality of gender analysis undertaken to inform strategic planning efforts at all levels, including through capacity development initiatives.

CONCLUSION 4

UN entities must strengthen monitoring and reporting of gender mainstreaming results at the outcome level, including by better linking them to the overall organizational monitoring system.

There is a gap in gender equality results management at the outcome level, which is related both to deficiencies in monitoring and reporting systems and issues with actual implementation. By taking steps to strengthen management for gender equality results at the outcome level, entities will be better able to identify the challenges related to actual implementation (as opposed to monitoring and reporting issues) so that these can be addressed and evaluability improved. Management for gender equality results can also be strengthened by operationally linking gender equality policies to corporate strategic plans—and related monitoring systems and country programme documents.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN entities should explore challenges related to outcome-level monitoring and reporting on gender equality results and—to the maximum extent possible—link it to the entities' overall corporate monitoring system.



ACCOUNTABILITY S LEARNING

GATE System: **The Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use**

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OVERSIGHT

Increasing and improving oversight: New commitments and stronger guidance

CONCLUSION 5

More evaluative evidence is needed on gender mainstreaming performance as well as on linkages between gender performance and gender development results.

More evaluative information is needed for accountability, learning and decision-making on gender mainstreaming by UN entities. Only two entities in the portfolio conducted more than one evaluation during the nine year period under review and almost half of entities meant to report against the UN-SWAP had not conducted a corporate gender equality evaluation. In addition, more attention needs to be given to testing the assumption that gender equality institutional results lead to improved gender equality development results or development results in general.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN entities should conduct gender equality evaluations prior to the mandatory update of gender equality policies every five years and include this commitment explicitly within gender equality policies.

CONCLUSION 6

UN entities would benefit from further methodological guidance for conducting corporate gender equality evaluations, including adopting the UN-SWAP as an analytical framework.

The review's use of the UN-SWAP framework as an analytical approach highlighted gaps within corporate gender equality evaluation practice. Its use as an evaluative framework is a promising approach that could support more holistic assessment and establish coherence among entity gender equality evaluations. This would enable more robust future system-wide reviews. It would also support triangulation of UN-SWAP performance reporting information based on self-assessment.

Corporate gender equality evaluations have focused more on assessing output-level than outcome-level results and UN entities should address evaluability issues that may affect the ability to assess gender equality outcome-level results. A review of gender-responsive evaluation systems within the UN was recently published by UN Women, in partnership with UNEG and EvalPartners, which highlighted some key steps for further strengthening gender-responsive evaluation in the UN system.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UNEG and UN Women Independent Evaluation Office should work together to develop methodological guidance and a sample terms of reference for corporate gender equality evaluation of UN entities.

NADI MARKET VENDORS WINNING THE TUG OF WAR AT THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENT AT NADI MARKET, FIJI, ON MARCH 9, 2015.



UN WOMEN/JELLIE VAN BAAREN

CONCLUSION 7

Programme review processes should integrate criteria for gender equality more systematically and compliance should be considered a key condition for approval.

The review found the inclusion of gender equality criteria in programme review processes to be limited. Their systematic inclusion, combined with increased support for implementing any corrective measures recommended, and the introduction of incentives can work together to improve the integration of gender analysis and perspectives within programme designs.

»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN Women should develop sample gender equality criteria for programme review processes that UN entities can adapt and tailor to their own contexts.

PERSONAL VOICES



Saori Terada

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) adviser on gender integration

There is often a disconnect between programmes officers and evaluators within the UN, the former often viewing evaluations as coming post facto without tangible impacts on ongoing programmes. I was one of those sceptics until OHCHR commissioned an evaluation on its performance on gender mainstreaming in 2009. The findings and recommendations were not only accurate, relevant and realistic; they were taken seriously by the Office's senior management, which acted on key recommendations by setting up a comprehensive gender architecture, adopting a Gender equality policy and implementation plans, and allocating financial and human resources to scale up gender integration in both OHCHR structure, culture and process, as well as its substantive programmes. In a few years, OHCHR became one of the Departments of the UN Secretariat with the highest rating on most UN-SWAP performance indicators. After being one of the eight UN entities to pilot the UN-SWAP framework, the Office is working hand-in-hand with UN Women supporting other entities in achieving targets in the areas of accountability, capacity development and organizational culture. OHCHR also worked with UN Women in the development of the UNEG guidance on integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation and co-convenes of the UNEG Gender Equality and Human Rights Working Group. The Review of Corporate Gender Equality Evaluations in the United Nations System confirms many of the recommendations and lessons learned OHCHR experienced in this journey. I am convinced its findings will be useful to gender advisers and focal points in carrying out their mandates by supporting their advocacy with empirical evidence.

HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Still a way to go

CONCLUSION 8

UN entities' gender architectures should be made 'fit-for-purpose' to drive gender mainstreaming institutionally.

The insights indicate that gender architectures within UN entities need to be strengthened holistically at both headquarters and field level. The gender architecture among entities varies considerably, as expected given their different resource levels, structures and mandates. However, developing a set of models would help to guide entities in establishing or refining gender architectures to ensure they are 'fit-for-purpose'. An assessment of current models would provide useful analysis to develop such models, including those attached to peacekeeping missions. The size and scope of work of gender units, the existence or level of field-based capacity, the role and capacity of other units and the establishment and role of gender focal point networks all need to be considered when developing such models.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN Women should conduct an assessment of gender architectures within the UN system and develop potential gender architecture models to guide UN entities.

CONCLUSION 9

There must be a shift in focus from gender parity rates to a more in-depth analysis of the gender parity impediments, especially in higher level positions.

While some gender parity figures were reported, there was limited analysis of the factors supporting gender parity, of barriers preventing improvement at all staffing levels and of the use of common categorizations. There was also limited understanding of the effects of maintaining low rates of gender parity (e.g., upward mobility of women, available applicant pools for higher-level posts).

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** Analyse and devise strategies to address underlying barriers to increase gender parity at all levels and uncover the costs of maintaining the status quo. UN entities should ensure usage of standard classifications from the Secretary-General's annual report on the status of women in the UN system for tracking gender parity.



CONCLUSION 10

Enhance actual implementation of supportive policies that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in the workplace.

The insights indicate that staff were not making full or consistent use of supportive policies that promote gender equality and the empowerment of women (e.g., facilitative, anti-harassment, flexible working arrangements) that are available within entities. Guidance on how to address challenges in restructuring workflows, workloads and schedules to adjust to new ways of working would increase buy-in by management. Looking beyond facilitative policies to also address informal culture and decision-making procedures is also needed to improve organizational culture.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN Women should further develop indicative guidance on how supportive policies that promote gender equality can be practically implemented and tracked, as well as promoting training for management and staff to address organizational culture in a more holistic manner.

CONCLUSION 11

UN entities must establish clear financial benchmarks for gender equality allocations and commit to tracking of actual expenditures.

UN entities have been operating without clear financial benchmarks to guide allocations for gender equality. Without establishing a benchmark, entities run the risk of not allocating adequate resources for their gender mainstreaming endeavours. A benchmark can be established by reviewing existing financial and performance data. Reporting on progress to senior management and governance bodies should be made mandatory. Once benchmarks are established, they would likely drive improvements in the application of gender markers to more accurately track and report on allocations and expenditures.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN Women and UN Development Group Millennium Development Goal and gender task teams should continue to support the Finance and Budget Network to establish financial benchmarks for gender equality, utilizing UN-SWAP reporting information to guide decisions, and continue to support entities to improve application and use of the UN Development Group Gender Marker.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

More guidance needed

CONCLUSION 12

Gender equality capacity development strategies must be developed, resourced and implemented if UN entity staff are expected to effectively implement gender mainstreaming within their work.

The low capacity levels cited at all job levels calls into question the ability of staff to effectively implement the gender mainstreaming strategy without targeted and tailored support and training based on roles and responsibilities or job descriptions. Capacity assessment needs to be conducted to inform strategies that provide a range of formal and informal initiatives and make use of existing and system-wide capacity initiatives. Assessment of the effectiveness of capacity development strategies is also needed to understand if and how capacity is improving.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN Women should promote the implementation and usage of the guidance developed for conducting capacity assessment and monitor the usage of the system-wide training module developed by its Training Centre. It should also consider developing guidance for developing gender equality capacity development strategies.

COHERENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Tracking knowledge

CONCLUSION 13

UN entities would benefit from developing formal knowledge management strategies and tracking the use of knowledge products.

While both formal and informal knowledge-generation and communications initiatives are undertaken by entities, developing a formal knowledge management strategy and communication plan would make the undertaking more systematic and strengthen monitoring and reporting on their results.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN Women should develop guidance for formal knowledge management strategies on gender equality.



FISHERWOMEN IN LAKE KARIBA IN ZIMBABWE. THE SIACHILABA WOMEN KAPENTA PROJECT IS CHAMPIONED BY THE RURAL WOMEN FROM ZUBO BASILIZWI TRUST IN BINGA, WHO FORMALLY ENTERED THE MALE DOMINATED FISHERY INDUSTRY FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THEIR FORCED RESETTLEMENT FROM THE CURRENT LAKE KARIBA IN 1957. THIS WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY SUPPORT FROM UN WOMEN WHO PROVIDED FINANCES TO BUY A FISHING RIG THAT IS OPERATED BY THE WOMEN THEMSELVES.

OTHER CONCLUSIONS

Better adapting to humanitarian settings

CONCLUSION 14

More focus is needed on improving coherence on gender equality at the country level.

With institutional system-wide mechanisms now in place for accountability for performance, there is a need to turn to the country level. The recently completed desk review of the UN country team performance indicators on gender equality (“the Scorecard”) provides a set of 15 recommendations for revising or updating the performance indicators and improving alignment and complementarity with the UN-SWAP. Enhancing coherence at the country level would also further strengthen the ability to assess the linkages between gender equality institutional results and gender equality and the empowerment of women development results.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN Women should implement the recommendations of the desk review of the UN country team performance indicators on gender equality to further promote country-level coherence on gender equality.

CONCLUSION 15

Different methods and approaches need to be developed to address the specific challenges for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian settings.

The insights show overall lower performance on gender mainstreaming within humanitarian settings that is partly attributed to the nature of the work. However, attention to gender equality issues within humanitarian operations is clearly essential given that women and girls may face additional issues related to security, protection and discrimination because of the humanitarian context.

»»»» **WAY FORWARD:** UN entities working in humanitarian settings and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group on the Review of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Policy can take the insights of this review into consideration to devise new methods for integrating gender equality within their work modalities and develop further guidance, tools and performance indicators specific for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian contexts.



RESPONDING TO THE REVIEW

Learning from this review: the Management perspective

The “Review of corporate gender equality evaluations in the UN system” offers useful insights on gender mainstreaming within the UN system prior to the implementation of the UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

Its utilization-focused approach, employing the UN-SWAP framework itself, proves useful, as does the actionable and concrete nature of the insights, which will earn the appreciation of practitioners in the different entities and departments. The review represents a useful base for discussion as the UN system consultatively moves forward, reflecting also on the next phase of the UN-SWAP.

More specifically, the review draws a close correspondence between the gender mainstreaming gaps identified by the evaluations and the indicators of the UN-SWAP, indicating that the comprehensive design of the UN-SWAP effectively responded to real and broad-based weaknesses in the application of gender mainstreaming approaches. It also aligns with and reinforces several of the results and findings of the UN-SWAP itself in its three years of implementation. This relevance undergirds the high uptake of the UN-SWAP (more than

90 per cent of UN entities), in particular when compared to other instruments with a similar intent.

With respect to analysis and identification of factors strategic to progress for mainstreaming gender equality into the work of the UN system, the review confirms that strong gender equality policies are essential levers driving improved performance and that the contextualization in strategic planning is crucial. UN Women has significantly invested in this realm—in terms of training, guidance and direct technical support—and will undoubtedly continue on this path. Hopefully UN Women will further refine existing guidance and pay renewed attention both to advocating for an enhanced role of gender units and focal points and to encouraging a more systematic gender analysis in country programme documents in particular. This approach is expected to enhance focus and attention on coherence in gender equality work at the country level, where the next step of coordination lies.

The review confirms that strong gender equality policies are essential levers driving improved performance and that the contextualization in strategic planning is crucial.

While the UN-SWAP has delivered well and with innovation in the context of its intended goal of improved, harmonized and systematized monitoring, reporting and evaluation across the UN system, more needs to be done to solidly ground a results-based and evaluative culture in gender equality work. Change in organizational practices and gender relations may appear to pose challenges yet are still to be captured in monitoring and evaluation systems. Notwithstanding this, the UN-SWAP represents a possible model of a methodical approach to gender mainstreaming and enhanced performance. In this context, UN Women fully intends to continue its vigilance and analysis, both of which will benefit directly from the useful findings of the review. In particular, UN Women and its partners can look constructively to the review to strengthen the UN-SWAP and its application as an analytical framework to collect evaluative evidence.

Ms. Lakshmi Puri
Deputy Executive Director

PERSONAL VOICES

Aparna Mehrotra on UN-SWAP



Aparna Mehrotra

UN Women Senior Adviser on Coordination and Focal Point for Women in the UN system, UN Women Strategic Partnerships, Coordination & Intergovernmental Support Bureau

The UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women or UN-SWAP constitutes a pioneering coordination, monitoring and accountability mechanism which has harmonized, revitalized and systematized gender mainstreaming work across the UN system. With its multi-faceted approach and the creation of a catalogue of tools, a web of expertise and inter-active fora, it has generated a new and active culture of solidarity, systematic and broad engagement, substantive growth, active inter-agency collaboration and partnership. Further, the mandatory annual reporting on a common set of indicators has yielded a clearer baseline against which progress can be more consistently monitored and challenges more methodically addressed to strengthen gender mainstreaming in the work of the United Nations.

Key Achievements to Date

	2012	2014
% of UN system that had a gender equality policy	30.8% 21 out of 68	54.4% 37 out of 68
% of UN system that had mandatory gender training	17.6% 21 out of 68	35.3% 21 out of 68
% of UN System that had financial resource tracking for gender equality and women's empowerment	17.6% 10 out of 68	22.1% 15 out of 68

Source: Data provided by the UN System Coordination Division of the UN Women Strategic Partnerships, Coordination & Intergovernmental Support Bureau through UN-SWAP reporting.

REVIEW APPROACH

Testing the UN-SWAP as an analytical framework

The review was led by UN Women, in consultation with the UN Evaluation Group, EvalPartners and EvalGender.

A structured search process identified 62 documents for potential inclusion in the review from the 69 UN entities meant to report against the UN System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). After screening for relevance and quality, 17 corporate gender equality evaluations completed between 2006 and 2014 were identified for inclusion in the portfolio. Another 26 documents were used to triangulate, validate or contextualize the evaluation findings. The portfolio provides evaluative evidence on 55 per cent (37) of UN-SWAP reporting entities.

The UN-SWAP performance reporting framework, the central tool for mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women in the UN system, was selected as the analytical framework to increase the relevance and use of the review findings. It consists of set of 15 performance indicators organized around the six policy areas of the Chief Executives Board policy: accountability, results-based management, oversight, human and financial resources, capacity development and coherence. The category 'exceeds requirements' for each performance indicator was used as the benchmark for analysis.

Both quantitative and qualitative data have been analysed for patterns and gaps, with insights organized around the six policy areas. At the same time, the analysis of each policy area was also conducted more broadly to capture any relevant information that may not have been captured through a strict adherence to the performance indicators. This also supported gap analysis within the UN-SWAP framework itself.

There were a number of limitations in conducting this review. First, the evaluations reviewed differed from one another in terms of analytical approach, coverage of

policy areas and time frame, limiting the ability to synthesize lessons across entities and progress over time. Second, as evaluation findings are retrospective to the time preceding the finalization of a report, it follows that the findings contained are also reflective of the period preceding completion. This may explain any differences between findings contained in this review and other more current sources assessing performance. Finally, the findings and conclusions in this report are limited to the information available in the portfolio of evaluations. It does not reflect the status of progress in gender mainstreaming practice that has been documented elsewhere by UN entities.



62 Documents reviewed

from



69 UN entities



17 Corporate gender equality evaluations



26 Documents to triangulate, validate or contextualize the findings



55% Evaluative Evidence on 37 out of 69 of UN-SWAP reporting entities

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