

A woman wearing glasses and a green tank top is holding a power sander in a workshop. The workshop is filled with various tools and materials on shelves and workbenches. The background is slightly blurred, focusing on the woman.

META-ANALYSIS BRIEF



## WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM UN WOMEN EVALUATIONS?

### A meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2016

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As part of its continuous effort to promote learning and accountability, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Independent Evaluation Office undertakes an annual meta-analysis to ensure that the body of evidence produced by corporate and decentralized evaluations is synthesized to help strengthen programming and organizational effectiveness.

This year's meta-analysis contributes to this effort by synthesizing insights and drivers of change from multiple evaluations. The analysis transformed evaluative evidence into accessible knowledge to catalyze learning on key issues including flagging major areas where UN Women needs to either do more or do it differently. The analysis will contribute to better understanding of the context in which ongoing and new initiatives will be implemented, including implementation of the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

#### What did the meta-analysis find?

UN Women interventions have maintained good performance levels in terms of relevance and effectiveness for development results. There is also new evidence of substantive improvement in results-based management systems in 2016, while sustainability and efficiency have the greatest potential for continued improvement.

Further, the meta-analysis concludes that while individual interventions vary in development effectiveness, UN Women is consistently and effectively contributing to development outcomes, national policies, and the needs of women. Broadly,

evaluations confirmed the decentralized capacity as central to strengthening UN Women's leadership on gender equality, and facilitating meaningful relations and dialogue between diverse stakeholders in improving effectiveness across all country contexts. Future strategies to augment UN Women's existing achievements can include nurturing gender equality, expertise in national systems, investing in UN Women's own expertise in resource mobilization and data systems, and deeper integration of programming and coordination through country level.

The following are key findings based on Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development—Development Assistance Committee criteria for assessing development effectiveness.

#### RELEVANCE

The relevance of UN Women interventions has been increasingly positive since 2013, with more recent improvements being in improving relationships with partners.

#### EFFECTIVENESS

The establishment of decentralized capacity has been central to establishing UN Women's leadership on gender equality. Expanding this leadership role at the country level requires closer integration of UN coordination and operational programming within strategic notes.

#### EFFICIENCY

UN Women's systems are supporting efficient use of the resources that are currently available to the organization. Given constraints in the overall levels of resourcing, the priority

for UN Women to strengthen its efficiency are to continue to reinforce the financial management and programme execution capacities of strategic partners.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability across UN Women's operational portfolio was found to be mixed, with evidence that achievements are likely to continue increasing when they have been supported through longer programming cycles.

### RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Evaluations found that UN Women's results-based management systems had strengthened compared to previous years. This largely validates the effectiveness of the work recently done to implement the corporate results management system and the organizational focus on results-based management.

## How can UN Women leverage insights to strategically drive change?

This section presents the results of the qualitative synthesis as they relate to the drivers of change in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The analysis applied a forward-looking approach to inform corporate perspectives as UN Women transitions towards implementation of its new Strategic Plan.

### EVIDENCE, DATA AND STATISTICS

Interventions focused on building national capabilities to generate and use data are an emerging strength for UN Women at the country level. While these efforts have not yet been fully

consolidated into a defining corporate asset, the new Strategic Plan 2018-2021 proposes to address this need. However, more and better evidence is also needed – including evaluative evidence – in respect to working with youth, men and boys, and on South-South cooperation.

### KNOWLEDGE HUB

UN Women's role as a knowledge hub at the country, regional, and global level is emerging as the centerpiece of its current and future effectiveness in advancing gender equality and empowerment of women.

### ALLIANCE BUILDING

Facilitating meaningful relations and dialogue between diverse stakeholders is central to UN Women's effectiveness across all country contexts. Partnerships are the area with greatest potential for enhancing the relevance of UN Women interventions. There is a strong case for leveraging recent successes in improving partnership relationships to build greater effectiveness.

### INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

While evaluative evidence on UN Women digital innovation strategies is not yet available, evaluations do highlight the effectiveness of innovating traditional processes to enhance participation, co-creation, and social cohesion. Furthermore, they highlight a need for more evaluation evidence about innovative approaches to working with specific constituencies, especially youth, and men and boys.

