

TRANSFORM

The Strategic Partnerships Issue

Aiming for transformative change

PAGE 6

Moving forward: Eight ways to
enhance UN Women's strategic
partnerships for gender equality
and women's empowerment

PAGE 24

Partnering in Action:
The Coca Cola Company
& UN Women in Brazil

PAGE 32





Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present to you our tenth issue of Transform, addressing a topic that is critical for achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, but often overlooked: strategic partnerships. Partnering is an essential aspect of our work and can have huge implications for multiplied impact, but also higher risk. We rarely have an opportunity to take a step back and reflect on our approach to partnering and whether we are taking the right approach with the right partners.

UN Women Independent Evaluation Office undertook a corporate evaluation to learn from progress made so far and inform future strategic partnerships for gender equality and women's empowerment. The evaluation covered strategic partnerships at all levels and across all dimensions of UN Women work. It identified strengths and weaknesses and developed eight recommendations intended to enhance UN Women's approach to strategic partnerships. Highlights of its findings and next steps are included in this issue. To read a more detailed version of the report, you can access the full report at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation/corporate-evaluations>.

We hope you find this issue useful in strengthening the work of UN Women and its partners worldwide.

Marco Segone

Director, Independent Evaluation Office

✉ marco.segone@unwomen.org

🐦 @msegone

Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.

EDITORS

Marco Segone
Sabrina Evangelista
Daniele Elizaire

EVALUATION MANAGERS

Inga Sniukaite
Sabrina Evangelista

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lattanzio Advisory S.P.A
Srilatha Batliwala,
External Evaluation Advisor
Sarah Earl, *External Evaluation Advisor*
UN Women Internal &
External Reference Groups
UN Women Regional Office,
East and Southern Africa
UN Women Kenya
UN Women Regional Office, Arab States
UN Women Egypt
UN Women Brazil
UN Women Georgia
UN Women India Multi-Country Office

COPY EDITOR

Margo Alderton

ART DIRECTION & DESIGN

Ultravirgo

UN WOMEN

220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017
ieo@unwomen.org
www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation
Twitter: @unwomenEval

Full report available at
<http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation/corporate-evaluations>

The analysis and recommendations in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of UN Women, its Executive Board or the United Nations Member States. The designations in this publication do not imply an opinion on the legal status of any country or territory, or its authorities, or the delimitation of frontiers. The text has not been edited to official publication standards and UN Women accepts no responsibility for error.

Partnering for transformative change

Partnering for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

PAGE 2

Why evaluate strategic partnerships?

PAGE 4



Aiming for transformative change

PAGE 6



MOVING FORWARD

Eight ways to enhance UN Women's strategic partnerships for gender equality and women's empowerment

PAGE 24

PARTNERING IN ACTION

The Coca Cola Company & UN Women in Brazil

PAGE 32

METHODOLOGY

How we evaluated strategic partnerships

PAGE 34



ON THE COVER UN Women, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Always celebrated at Teatro de Câmara in Cidade das Artes, the 'One Win Leads to Another' initiative, which gives an opportunity to adolescent girls living in socially vulnerable contexts to use sport as a tool to reduce gender inequalities and build and maintain confidence in their lives. With the attendance of nearly 200 of the girls participating in the project, the event highlighted the power of sport to change lives and break social stereotypes.

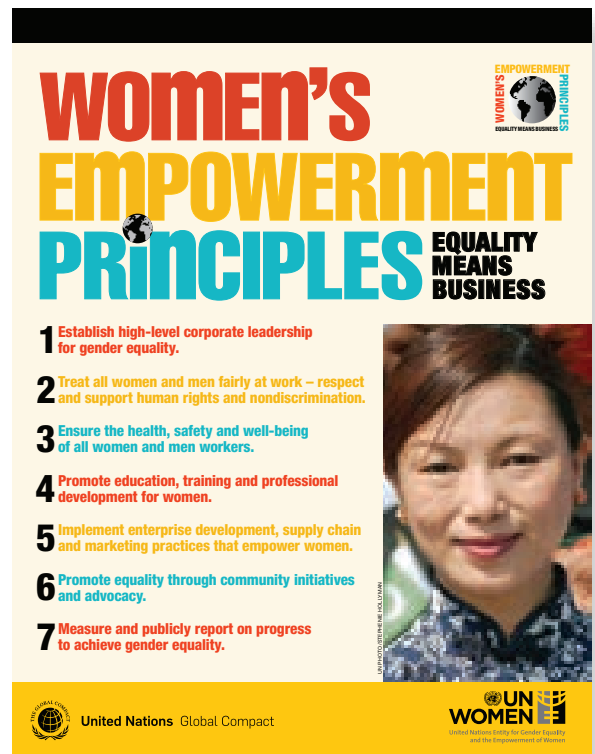
Partnering for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

The transformative vision of the sustainable development agenda adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015 places new demands on the scale, scope and ambition of UN Women's strategic partnerships to achieve transformative change by 2030. In particular, the SDG Agenda sets unprecedented and ambitious goals and targets for gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) (specifically the stand-alone gender goal 5 and GEEW targets under the other goals) that will require the commitment of a wide diversity of stakeholders for their achievement.

Despite having limited resources, both financial and human capital, UN Women has built strategic partnerships with a variety of sectors aimed at generating transformative change in the social and cultural patterns between women and men. The wide spectrum and breadth of partners include civil society, government, UN system, private sector, academia, celebrities, foundations, media, sports, youth, men and boys, and faith actors. The Executive Director has brought renewed and strengthened attention to strategic partnerships, in particular with non-traditional partners (men and boys, faith based organizations,

youth organizations) and the private sector (the launch of the UN Global Compact put a strong emphasis on resource mobilization (RM) and direct involvement of the Executive Director's Office in steering strategic partnerships for UN Women). Under the leadership of the new Deputy Executive Director for the Policy and Programme Bureau, UN Women launched (September 2015) the Flagship

Programming Initiatives (FPI) which will shape UN Women country-level programming, resource mobilization and strategic partnerships in the future.





ACCOUNTABILITY S LEARNING

GATE System:

The Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use

An on-line based Public Information Management System, which facilitates UN Women's effort to strategically plan and effectively use evaluations for accountability, management for results, and knowledge management.

>>>> <http://gate.unwomen.org/>



Independent
Evaluation Office

Why evaluate strategic partnerships?

A WOMAN FARMER IN HUNZA VALLEY OF PAKISTAN WORKS WITH CHERRY, APRICOT AND ALMOND TREES.

Partnerships are an essential aspect of our work, but are often overlooked when we evaluate the results of our work. The skill set, time and resources necessary for ensuring truly effective strategic partnerships are often underestimated. In 2015-2016, the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office undertook a corporate evaluation of UN Women's Strategic Partnerships for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The evaluation is intended to enhance UN Women's approach to strategic partnerships with the aim of ensuring that gender equality is reached by 2030. It was also expected to contribute to an understanding of how UN Women's strategic partnerships can facilitate a strong position for gender equality and women's empowerment within the current global development context and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030).

The evaluation developed a working model consisting of four elements, each of which was evolved through consultations with UN Women management and staff during the evaluation's HQ assessment and case study visits:

- a) **Defining characteristics:** What makes partnerships strategic? What does UN Women look for from strategic partnerships that differentiates them from other types of working arrangements?
- b) **Partnership modalities:** What are the partnership arrangements that are used by UN Women to govern strategic partnerships?
- c) **Enabling factors:** What are the characteristics of effective partnerships?
- d) **Results:** What are the typical results to which UN Women's strategic partnerships are intended to contribute?

Since its foundation, UN Women has stressed the importance of working through partnerships with both right-holders and duty-bearers to deliver on its composite mandate and achieve its goal for the advancement of GEEW globally, regionally and at the country level.

Defining characteristics for strategic partnerships

The defining characteristics for strategic partnerships bring UN Women closer to a definition for strategic partnerships and were applied in the selection of partnerships for the evaluation. These characteristics were established based on consultations with UN Women staff:

If a partnership contributes to the mission of both partners so as to be mutually beneficial

If a partnership leads to force multiplication, innovation or positive externalities that would not otherwise happen

If a partnership is a long-term commitment for transformational changes in gender relations

If a partnership combines the knowledge, experience and capabilities of its partners

If the above factors contribute to accelerating the achievement of common objectives for advancing GEEW

**THEN THE PARTNERSHIP IS A
"STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP"**



EXPERT'S VIEW

Srilatha Batliwala

Partnership falls within the spectrum of important but abstract and amorphous concepts – like democracy, leadership, equality – that are extremely hard to pin down conceptually and strategically. As someone who has worked on and with abstract concepts like power, empowerment, and leadership, and their practice in the women's rights and gender equality arena, I can appreciate how difficult it is to unpack – much less evaluate! – the concept and practice of strategic partnerships for a complex system like UN Women. The evaluation team is to be congratulated for taking on this very challenging task with both conceptual rigor and thoroughness. The sheer scale and scope of the evaluation process commands respect. The findings, conclusions and recommendations are both comprehensive and nuanced – and could provide valuable guidance to a broader range of social justice actors, where partnerships in the shape of networks, alliances and coalitions have become a critical mode for amplifying their voice and impact. This evaluation provides very valuable insights, principles and guidelines that constitute an excellent roadmap for UN Women to design its future partnership strategy. I strongly urge UN Women to create a user-friendly manual or toolkit based on this evaluation that would be welcomed by a much broader audience.



UN WOMEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECEIVED THE OLYMPIC FLAME FROM PRINCE ALBERT OF MONACO AND CARRIED IT THROUGH THE STREETS OF RIO DE JANEIRO, CELEBRATING WOMEN'S AND GIRL'S EMPOWERMENT.



Aiming for transformative change

*Looking across different partner types
and at all levels of UN Women work
from a human rights and gender lens,
the evaluation identified eight main conclusions.*

What have strategic partnerships achieved?

RESULTS THROUGH PARTNERING FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

1 UN Women strategic partnerships have contributed significantly to advancing gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) in the framework of the UN Women Strategic Plan. At their most effective, strategic partnerships have extended the reach, credibility, and influence of UN Women and its partners.

The most significant added value of partnerships has been in extending UN Women's reach, influence and access to constituencies, and in leveraging interactions between operational and policy work. UN Women worked with partners from all sectors to help influence the main frameworks that will shape the work of the UN system at large over the next 20 years, including the SDGs,

the Global Leaders Commitment to ending discrimination against women by 2030, and the new urban agenda (HABITAT III).

Strategic partnerships have contributed to the achievement of expected results, such as strengthening capacities and awareness among rights holders and duty bearers in favour of GEEW. There is also evidence of contributions to

more advanced results, including gender mainstreaming in partners' and third parties' policies and programmes, and changed behaviours in favour of GEEW. Overall, the evaluation found that, wherever it is established, a formalized partnership governance framework correlates with partnerships that achieve higher-level results, such as mainstreaming gender in partners' policies and practices. As might be expected, there is less evidence at country and regional levels of partnerships contributing to complex and ambitious changes at this stage. The evaluation concurs with the Midterm Review of the Strategic Plan conducted in 2016 that there is a need for greater focus and coordination, including among global actors, in support of the gender equality agenda and to implement global GEEW standards (including the SDGs) at the national level.

Achieving higher-level results requires UN Women to overcome hindering factors to strategic partnerships, especially: resource constraints and limits to the core capacity of the organization leading

UN Women is on track in achieving its organizational targets concerning strategic partnerships. However, the current institutional measure of success for strategic partnerships reflects a focus on quantitative increases and is insufficient to incentivize the pursuit of catalytic outcomes.



AS PART OF ITS INITIATIVES ON YOUNG WOMEN AND SPORT, ON THE THIRD AND FOURTH DAYS OF THE 2016 RIO OLYMPIC GAMES, UN WOMEN TOOK 350 GIRLS FROM THE FAVELAS OF RIO DE JANEIRO TO WATCH OLYMPIC HANDBALL.

Clear evidence exists of strategic partnerships contributing to all six of UN Women's Strategic Plan Impact Areas.

to time-pressure on over-stretched UN Women staff; the short-duration and project-based nature of many partnerships; sub-optimal internal coordination within the structural elements of UN Women; and reliance on the capacity (and energy) of a few individuals.

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

Public Defender's Office (PDO), Georgia

The PDO is the ombudsman for women's rights, supported and strengthened through partnership with UN Women. The partnership resulted in a gender strategy, mainstreaming gender throughout all areas of its work, and a proactive approach in monitoring government commitment to gender equality. This includes the development of a shadow report on CEDAW, a monitoring tool for the implementation of the Bangkok rules, and strong joint advocacy on the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul conventions.

The Secretariat of Policies for Women (SPM), Brazil

UN Women's partnership with SPM has contributed to strengthening GEEW by improving the quality, relevance and advocacy for legislation and policy favouring women's human rights. SPM has been able to provide solid, evidence-based legislative and policy proposals, backed by joint advocacy with UN Women, to have Congress adopt and implement laws involving other ministries—such as the Maria da Penha and the femicide laws with the Ministry of Justice, and the domestic workers law with the Ministry of Labour.

League of Arab States (LAS), Arab States Region

The partnership between UN Women Regional Office for Arab States and LAS is a positive example of systemic effects in relation to influencing regional normative and policy frameworks, in a more progressive way than what UN Women had been able to achieve through its work with Member States. The partnership led to the Cairo Declaration for Women in the Arab Region and the Regional Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security. The partnership's successes are built on clearly established mutual added value, reflected in a long-term institutional relationship.

How fit for purpose is UN Women's approach to Strategic Partnerships?

CONSOLIDATING VISION AND ALIGNING EXPECTATIONS FOR GREATER IMPACT

2 UN Women efforts have focused on growing and diversifying its partnership base. These have resulted in important contributions to advancing the GEEW agenda, particularly in relation to mainstreaming gender into the new set of global and national development frameworks.

While appropriate during its initial years, delivering on the promise of Agenda 2030 and other frameworks now requires a focus on fostering a shared UN Women vision for strategic partnerships, and consolidating a coherent and flexible organizational approach to implementing this vision.

UN Women demonstrates a strong organizational commitment to working in partnership. UN-Women's partnerships have reached a variety of partners, opened doors to untraditional partners, and have shown to be individually relevant in the current global context. Pragmatic approaches to partnerships and a responsive culture have enabled UN-Women to innovate and maximize the potential of limited resources. Many achievements have been built through strategic partnerships with established

actors, including all the processes related to normative gains in Agenda 2030 and HABITAT III.

While UN Women's partnerships increase its reach and influence, they also carry risks for UN Women's reputation and the sustainability of results that are not yet managed in a consistent way. The evaluation has identified an urgent demand for a more consolidated organizational approach for strategic partnerships that involves a common definition, rationale, principles, and indicators for engagement with (and across) diverse groups and in diverse contexts.

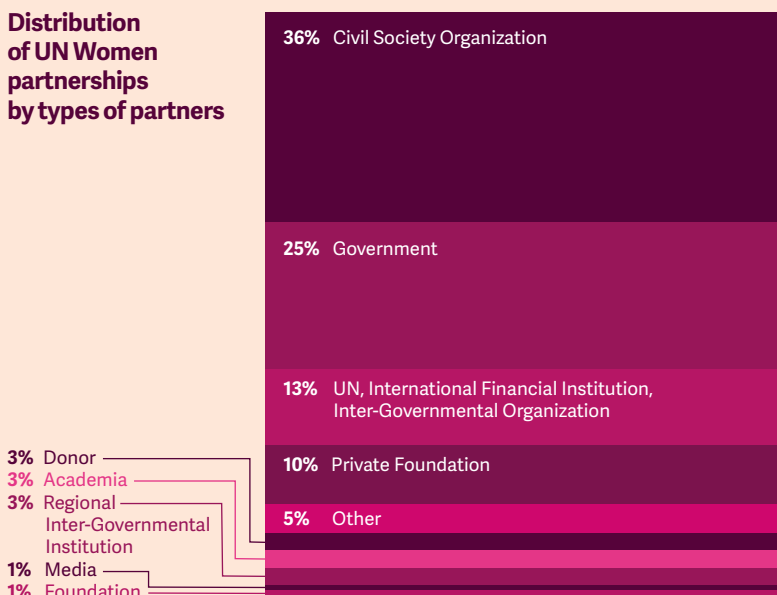
Greater attention must be paid to: balancing the organizational focus on engaging in new partnerships to meet emerging priorities with the need to maximize existing partnerships; prioritizing and linking partnerships; addressing uneven approaches to identifying and managing reputational risk based on lessons from experiences; and strengthening experience at the country level in navigating inherent tensions between different types of stakeholders, different partnership objectives, and different perspectives of women's empowerment and women's rights.

The evaluation points to the need for stronger internal clarity on strategic partnerships to ensure that UN Women continues to engage and invest over time in the most relevant and strategic partnerships to advance GEEW globally, regionally and at the country level.

UN Women staff members are forging complex and groundbreaking partnerships in contexts that involve profound differences in world views about gender equality.



Distribution of UN Women partnerships by types of partners



A shared organizational approach that can pull together experience with strategic partnership into a coherent framework for strategic partnership has yet to fully emerge.

How well geared is UN Women towards strategic partnership?

INTEGRATING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP THINKING ACROSS UN WOMEN STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

3 UN Women's organizational structures, operations systems and approach to risk were not originally designed with the explicit aim of supporting strategic partnerships. Consequently, multiple non-coordinated poles of responsibility for partnerships at HQ and a wide range of different practices in field offices now exist. While some aspects that support the prioritization, assessment of risk and operationalization of strategic partnerships have been developed, there is still a need for a comprehensive policy framework towards strategic partnerships.

There are many different aspects to strategic partnerships that help to explain what works, where, for whom, and why. To date, despite effective partnering by UN Women on many fronts, several aspects have limited the realization of a coherent, effective and shared policy framework for operationalizing strategic partnership. These include: limited financial resources and human capital; multiple non-coordinated poles of responsibility for partnerships; and the expectation that partnership management is everybody's responsibility with limited dedicated capacities.

UN Women's structures, systems and processes (e.g., Programme Operations Manual, OEEF, results

tracking systems, due diligence) have a major impact on UN Women's ability to work in partnership. They were not originally designed with the implications for partnership fully in mind. In particular, the Strategic Partnerships Division's (SPD) roles, responsibilities and resourcing have not been clearly spelled out in relation to whether

and how it will support the rest of the organization with the planning, coordination and operationalization of strategic partnerships.

To date, flexibility and dedication of individual staff at all levels has been required to navigate management systems to meet the requirements of strategic partnerships. In the absence of agreed guiding principles, UN Women is also reliant on extensive engagement by UN Women's leadership to select, design and set the tone of strategic partnerships on a case-by-case basis. Continuous negotiation of roles and responsibilities for each partnership is a barrier to a shared organizational vision, incentive structure and resource-allocation model for strategic partnerships.

Strengthening UN Women's systems for identifying opportunities and learning about how to make partnerships more effective can make a contribution to the gender equality movement as well as the organization.

KHATIA DZADZUA IS A LEADER OF A LOCALLY SET UP COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION – WHICH ORIGINATED FROM THE WOMEN'S SELF-HELP GROUP SET UP WITH THE SUPPORT OF UN WOMEN AND TASO FOUNDATION IN GEORGIA.



UN Women's leadership, both globally and at the decentralized level, plays a central role in fostering strategic partnerships, pursuing innovation and dealing successfully with problems.

A sufficiently equipped and authorized SPD has the potential to provide the necessary coordination and strategic policy framework for UN Women's strategic partnerships. Such a framework is required to balance the current management incentives (i.e., for resource mobilization and spending) with recognition for managers who contribute to establishing catalytic partnerships that deliver results over the long-term.

Prioritizing partnership opportunities

UN Women staff members are actively asking questions and being challenged by partners on how to better prioritize partnership opportunities in a strategically relevant way. The evidence points to some implications that can contribute to developing these answers:

- The current **number of partnerships is already high in comparison with the staff complement** of UN Women. This cautions against having more small partnerships, unless they are through intermediary organizations (an approach already being used by some COs).
- **Partnerships do not have to be "big" to fit the evaluation's working definition of strategic.** Given that part of UN Women's credibility stems from its inclusiveness and its "origin story" in the Gender Equality Architecture Reform Campaign, the evidence also cautions against prioritizing only a few large partnerships.
- Many partners need the validation of being described as strategic and to have the attention of UN Women's senior leadership—the **language used in any segmentation of partners will be loaded** with meaning for the partners to whom it is applied and needs to be selected and communicated carefully.
- Given UN Women's convening prowess and coordination mandate, the key question may not be about how to prioritize bilateral partnerships, but **how to shift to creating self-organizing multi-stakeholder partnership platforms outside of UN Women.** An inherent tension will likely always exist between parties founded primarily to advance women's human rights and parties for whom interest in women's empowerment is primarily conceived as of instrumental benefit to their wider objectives. The evaluation found that maintaining bilateral partnerships has a tendency to "import" this tension into relationships between different parts of the UN Women "house".
- The **process and transparency of prioritizing partners might be considered even more important than the final outcome**, and at present, there are insufficient opportunities for UN Women to engage its full partnership base in open dialogue—specifically about its plans and rationale for partnerships.

Have strategic partnerships reflected UN Women's values?

ADDRESSING UNDERLYING ROOT CAUSES INHIBITING GENDER EQUALITY AND INFLUENCING STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

4 The stated objectives of UN Women's strategic partnerships are consistently aligned to gender equality and human rights principles outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. However, in field operations, the modalities of partnership available to UN Women offices warrant being adjusted to better suit the needs of smaller partners, especially rights holders' organizations, and to fully reflect UN Women's feminist values.

The aims of individual partnerships consistently reflect the priorities, principles and objectives of normative human rights instruments at both the global and country level. Globally, UN Women continues to build on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to convene traditional allies as well as new and emerging constituencies (including faith-based organizations, youth, academia and goodwill ambassadors).

However, UN Women's operations rules and tools, while conducive at the global level to establishing long-term partnerships, are not especially suited to provide

flexible partnership entry points and modalities for smaller rights-holders' groups at the country level. The Joint Inspection Unit has made the case for developing a small-scale funding agreement and, possibly,

a grant mechanism to better serve this constituency as part of a broader policy framework for partnerships. The evaluation has found significant evidence to support the urgency of this case.

In addition to the refinement of fiduciary accountability implied by these alternative partnership modalities, the evaluation also concludes that application of feminist values to strategic partnership governance requires that future partnership agreements establish mutual accountability for performance to equalize power relations, especially between UN Women offices and strategic implementing partners.

Partnerships are critical to UN Women's ability to leverage transformational changes, address underlying causes, work with marginalized groups and influence the structural dominance of patriarchy.



Feminist characteristics of social movements

Their agenda is built from a gendered analysis of the problem or situation they are confronting or seeking to change.

Women form a critical mass of the movement's membership or constituency, women are the subjects, not objects or targets, of the movement.

They espouse feminist values and ideology. Gender equality, social and economic equality, the full body of human rights, tolerance, inclusion, peace, non-violence, respectful spaces and roles for all, etc., even if they don't call themselves feminist or articulate these values in more culturally specific ways.

They have systematically built and centered women's leadership in the movement. This is in contrast to movements that treat women's participation instrumentally—in the sense of adding the strength of numbers at rallies and marches, or to promote a more inclusive, gender-sensitive image of their movement but not giving women any real decision-making power or meaningful leadership roles.

The movement's political goals are gendered. They seek not only a change in the problem, but a change that privileges women's interests and seeks to transform both gender and social power relations.

They use gendered strategies and methods. Strategies that build on women's own mobilizing and negotiating capacities, and involve women at every stage of the process.

They create more feminist organizations, i.e., organizations that create more transparent systems and structures, consciously address the distribution of power and responsibility across roles, build a feminist practice of leadership (e.g. Batliwala, 2011), strong internal and external accountability and learning systems, and actively experiment with change within their own structures.

Source: Srilatha Batliwala. "Changing Their World - Concepts And Practices Of Women's Movements." AWID - Association For Women's Rights In Development, 2012. P. 6.

Do strategic partnerships across UN Women key constituencies respond to expectations?

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE MOVEMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

5 Civil society and the women's movement have been and will continue to be essential strategic partners to UN Women. UN Women must continue to see partnerships with civil society—both the women's movement and civil society more broadly—within the broader picture of building an inclusive movement for GEEW. Looking forward, ensuring that this approach is clear at all levels of UN Women and emphasizing the importance of mutual accountability in partnerships with civil society are the two main priorities.

This evaluation has reconfirmed the criticality of UN Women's relationship with women's civil society to advancing GEEW within the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Beijing Platform for Action. UN Women's convening power offers a significant comparative advantage for establishing multi-stakeholder partnerships by creating inclusive spaces, facilitating open dialogue and enhancing coordination of the gender equality movement. Some strategies have already emerged to leverage this comparative advantage, such as the new Civil Society Advisory Group Strategy and Flagship Programme Initiative.

Making these spaces effective, however, would require aspects of the relationship between UN Women and the women's movement

to be revisited, including ensuring a mutual accountability framework. The central challenge of continuing this strategic shift to movement-building is, therefore, to ensure that women's civil society not only has a platform to speak with other actors, but also has the resources, capacity, authority and political backing to do so effectively. Addressing this challenge can only be done with the women's movement, not for it.

Despite these challenges, the evaluation identified a number of good practices and promising

Changing relationships in the context of the transition from UNIFEM to UN Women, combined with a shrinking space for an already underfunded sector, have resulted in many unresolved expectations among civil society partners, in particular in relation to what role UN Women should play in/with the women's movement.

AT THE 61ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW61), UN WOMEN HOSTED A YOUTH FORUM TITLED, "YOUTH CREATE GENDER EQUALITY-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK" AT THE UN HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK.



opportunities that can be built upon. For instance, direct and open dialogue between the leadership of UN Women and women's civil society has led to mutual understanding and the formation of influential coalitions (such as Rio+20 and Financing for Development). The Civil Society Advisory Group structure continued to grow and to evolve by listening to women's organizations. And, finally, the UN Women Fund for Gender Equality and the UN Trust Fund for Ending Violence Against Women were valuable ambassadors for UN Women's commitment to strengthening the women's movement as an indispensable actor in its own right.

Case study of UN Women and women's civil society in Post 2015

Structured global working groups: These are seen as the most effective examples of UN Women working in partnership with civil society, and include the Financing for Development Conference and process, SDG indicator development, and advocacy with the Women's Major Group for commitment to a stand-alone gender goal in the Rio+20 outcome document. These initiatives also represented the closest integration of UN system coordination and civil society partnerships.

Loose global alliances of the women's movement: The Open Working Group process typifies the type of arrangement in which UN Women is "in the room" with other gender advocates but without having a pre-agreed strategy or coordinated set of tactics. Greater communication with selected CSOs and representatives of the Women's Major Group and Post 2015 coalition was seen later on in the process, as were efforts to convene civil society and Member States.

Consultation and communication at all levels: At both the global and country level, UN Women continuously engages in consultations and shares information with specific women's groups through CSAGs, CSW side events, and structured consultation for Beijing +20. While this generated information and knowledge relevant to Post 2015, participants did not see how it was used or connected to the other types of global partnerships.

These different types of partnership created an evolving "ecosystem" of different intersecting relationships with different parts of the women's movement but did not converge into a single platform for common action due to concerns about inclusiveness and the viability of doing so.



TEN OF THE WORLD'S LEADING COMPANIES HAVE RELEASED NEW WORKFORCE GENDER DIVERSITY FIGURES, INCLUDING DETAILS ON LEADERSHIP ROLES AND BOARD MEMBERSHIP, IN UN WOMEN'S INAUGURAL HEFORSHE PARITY REPORT.

ENGAGING THE CORPORATE SECTOR: FINDING BALANCE AMONG DIVERGENT VIEWS

6 There has been a rapid evolution of UN Women's approach to corporate partnerships and some innovative methods are being used to build brand recognition, engender the footprint of the corporate sector, and fundraise for GEEW. These efforts have resulted in many successes and lessons, but also to substantial reputational risks. Given the contributions of these achievements and risks to UN Women delivering its ambitions, the number of private-sector specialists is far below the level required to address all of the demands placed on them.

A major feature in the changing nature of strategic partnerships over the course of the time period covered by this evaluation has been the high-level organizational focus on expanding the number, scale and depth of UN Women's partnerships with corporations. This intentional strategy has sought to massively expand the reach

of UN Women's influence through both the corporate "footprints" (employees, supply chain, customers) of these strategic partners and the financial resources, capabilities and access that they might contribute to support UN Women's Strategic Plan.

All UN entities face a potential conflict of interest inherent in

fundraising from the corporate sector while also holding it to account for human rights norms and standards covered by their mandates. UN Women is cognizant of these challenges and engaged in active internal debate on how best to address them. It has a due diligence system for the selection of private-sector partners, and increasingly involves active participation of interested parties across the entity in the design of corporate strategies. UN Women's leadership is also committed to engaging corporate partners to secure effective stewardship of women empowerment principles in their own business (and increasingly their supply chain), and to support enhanced standards and norms in the business sector.

Despite recognizing the direct role of the corporate sector as change agent, key UN Women stakeholders suggest that the ultimate driver of current strategic partnership strategies with this constituency remains resource mobilization. This is at odds with available evidence on the limits of corporate contributions to UN Women and to the United Nations more broadly.

PRIVATE-SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN WOMEN IN 2015

\$11.8 million

3.8% of total voluntary contributions

I want equality for women and men.

I am **HeForShe**



Join me at HeForShe.org

We're inviting men and boys around the world to stand together in solidarity – with each other and with women – to create a shared vision for gender equality. And it starts by answering a simple question... who are you?



IN MEXICO, UN WOMEN COMMEMORATED INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BY INAUGURATING 50 WOMEN-ONLY BUSES, KNOWN AS ATHENA. WITH AN INITIATIVE IN SUPPORT OF THE SAFE CITIES PROGRAMME.



INFLUENCING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH UNITED NATIONS COORDINATION

7 UN Women's relationships with UN entities (through UN coordination) provide an important means for coordinating more effective strategic partnerships outside of the United Nations. However, inconsistencies between the priorities and operational systems of different UN entities at the country level means different members of the UN Country Team are frequently found to be maintaining separate bilateral (and sometimes competitive) relationships with a single strategic partner, resulting in inefficiencies.

While UN Women effectively enters into country-level partnerships with UN entities to deliver UN Development Assistance Framework results, the evaluation found limited evidence of UN agencies collaborating in managing relations with non-UN strategic partners (such as coordinated relationships with a non-UN organization, common support to a civil society organization through a joint programme, or leveraging the strategic partnerships held by other UN entities to advance GEEW). More often, different members of the UN Country Team were found to be maintaining separate bilateral (and sometimes competitive) relationships with the same strategic partner. While there was no clear evidence of this resulting in duplication, more frequent joint

management of relations and programming with strategic partners (such as major civil society organizations in a country) would help to enhance synergies and reduce transaction costs.

The evaluation found limited evidence of country-level strategic partnerships (designed before the Flagship Programme Initiative) having been designed to maximize the advantage of UN-Women's UN coordination role to promote such integration. Maintaining strategic partnerships through UN

Coordinating with UN entities for effective strategic partnership

Where UN entities are coordinated and can manage to avoid fundraising competition, synergies with strategic partners can be more easily realized (such as around the Girls Count campaign in India). Where UN entities are not coordinated, fundraise bilaterally, or articulate different conceptual perspectives on the same theme (e.g., Safe Cities globally), partners tend to lose confidence and are cautious in fully committing to partnerships.

coordination was found to be subject to several practical barriers that need to be overcome (i.e., the auditing requirements of different UN entities for project cooperation agreements are not aligned, and the underlying theories of change used by UN entities operating in the same space emphasize different approaches).

Adopting a “communications and convening approach” to mobilizing and developing partnerships that include UN agencies has shown great promise.

COORDINATING ACROSS DIFFERENT AGENCIES OF MEMBER STATES

8 All relationships with Member States have strategic implications. UN Women would likely benefit from having a more coordinated approach to working in partnership with the various agencies of Member States with which it engages at the global, regional and country level.

Partnerships with Member States are already pursued through building relationships with regional and sub-regional groups that operate at the United Nations, as well as groupings like the Non Aligned Movement and the G77 and China. Partnerships are also pursued by UN Women with intergovernmental organizations, such as the League of Arab States, European Union, African Union, Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Association of Southeast Asian Nations, among others.

Member States have a unique role and relationship with regard to UN Women—providing the mandate, accountability and majority of UN Women’s resources. All relationships with Member States therefore have strategic implications. It was also found that UN Women often maintains multiple avenues and

levels of partnership with different parts of a Member State’s bureaucracy, including its delegations, development agencies and national women’s machinery (either directly through programme offices or indirectly through intergovernmental forums or UN Women National Committees).

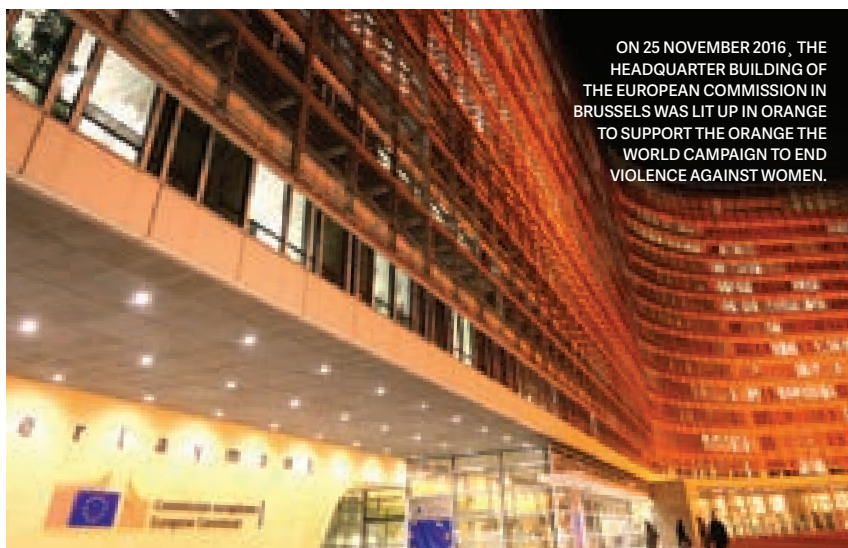
While these multiple connections might be brought together within the framework of a strategic partnership to advance a particular agenda, no clear model for such a strategic partnership between UN Women and a Member State was found to exist. Establishing more clearly defined strategic partnerships with Member States that are party to multi-stakeholder partnerships could make a significant contribution to UN Women’s ability to pursue structural transformation.

Partnering with governments at the country level

UN Women is increasingly diversifying its partnerships with governments at the country level. Women’s machineries are still natural partners, but more partnerships are now being forged with line ministries, including in non-traditional sectors of engagement for UN Women where there is strong potential for change in favour of GEEW. These include: ministries of defense to work on women, peace and security; ministries of the interior (e.g., police) and justice on ending violence against women; economic ministries (e.g., agriculture, extractive industries) on women’s economic empowerment; and central ministries (finance, budget, foreign affairs, decentralization) on gender responsive budgeting and governance issues.

Partnering with regional organizations

The partnership with the European Union enables UN Women to contribute to policy development by a regional body, specific advocacy activities (such as on ending violence against women), in addition to accessing joint programming and financial cooperation and developing country-level partnerships between European Union delegations and UN Women Country Offices as well as headquarters. This has been successful in large part due to information and programmatic support from the UN Women liaison office in Brussels and subsequent outreach by Country Offices and headquarters.





GGWC/SDG DREAM TEAM LAUNCH. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT THE TWO FIRST MEMBERS OF THE DREAM TEAM, FATUMA ABDULKADIR, FROM KENYA AND EMMA HOLTEN, FROM DENMARK, POSE FOR A PORTRAIT ON THE TERRACE OF THE DELEGATES LOUNGE.

What works for strategic partnerships?

INNOVATIONS

The evaluation identified some emerging examples of positive innovations in UN Women's partnership approaches that could be further explored, extended and supplemented by future innovation. These include:



Working with non or less traditional groups, diversifying the entry points to influence GEEW.



Applying an intersectionality approach (i.e., gender, race, age, ethnicity, etc.) to engage diverse voices.



Using low-investment communication-based strategies to leverage support for GEEW within the popular social narrative – e.g., HeForShe sign-up events, media delegations.



Using a focused selection of campaigns as an entry point for mobilizing prospective donors.



Building upon HeForShe HeForShe is emerging as an important asset for keeping partners engaged in a way that is both meaningful and manageable.

GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS

The evaluation team identified the following emerging good practices and lessons from the analysed strategic partnerships.



Use a phased approach in partnerships, from more targeted to broader engagement.



Use mass and popular approaches for campaigns: HeForShe, UNITE and national campaigns for ending violence against women.



Use an open/low-stake approach to initiate partnerships (especially with funding partners). The challenge is firming up the partnership after the initial exposure and prioritizing action.



Leverage UN Women's convening power to foster change through supporting multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms for GEEW. UN Women has been able to play a positive bridging role between government and civil society organizations and influence other governments and donors.



Rely on partners' operational and administrative capacities for programming, in particular to engage with local and field CSOs and grass-roots organizations to maximize effective division of labor and strengthen opportunities to link field and policy/normative work.



Build a wide range of activities together, including research and knowledge development, advocacy, shared analysis, etc. as appropriate to establish a partnership relationship that does not depend on funding.

WHAT WORKS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

Check out the **GENDER EQUALITY EVALUATION PORTAL** at
> **[Genderevaluation.unwomen.org](https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org)**

The portal makes available more than 400 evaluations and helps promote the exchange of evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations related to gender and development.

Please share your evaluations by clicking 'join'!



Independent
Evaluation Office



The evaluation identified eight recommendations that are critical for effective strategic partnerships for gender equality and women's empowerment. These recommendations call for significant decisions that require dialogue and commitment from across all levels of the organization.







1

Establishing a sufficiently resourced, integrated and commonly agreed framework for strategic partnerships needs to be a central part of UN Women's 2018–2021 Strategic Plan.

In support of this, UN Women requires a more clearly articulated definition, vision and set of principles for strategic partnerships that are owned, communicated and understood throughout the organization. This can build on the defining characteristics for strategic partnership elaborated in this evaluation. Three priority actions are recommended to implement this approach:

a) Establish a strategic partnership policy framework with a clear definition, vision, set of principles and vocabulary for partnerships in UN Women;

b) Publish a clear statement of the risk appetite of UN Women regarding performance, fiduciary and reputational risks from partnering, including establishing acceptable boundaries for innovation. This should be combined with the promulgation of the organizational risk management system at all levels; and

c) Commit sufficient staff time and attention to establishing partnership roadmaps for each strategic partnership using the Partnership Governance and Accountability (PGA) Guidelines.

The evidence from the evaluation indicates that strategic partnerships have worked best when they are geared towards achieving specific shared goals and where there is alignment between the vision and systems of the partners.

2

Within the proposed framework for strategic partnerships, establish clarity regarding roles and responsibilities within the current UN Women structures that will best support strategic partnerships and explicitly recognize the corresponding importance of leadership capacities, skills and knowledge for partnership work.

Within the regional architecture and at Headquarters level, the evaluation recommends three actions to address the organization's capabilities to develop and manage strategic partnerships:

a) In the short-term, establish strategic partnership focal points in all parts of the Regional Architecture and in each Headquarters section with responsibility for coordinating strategic partnerships in liaison with the Strategic Partnerships Division.



DEVELOPED BY MEMAC OGILVY & MATHER DUBAI, A UN WOMEN AD SERIES EXPOSING THE EXTENT OF SEXISM THROUGH REAL AUTOCOMPLETE SEARCHES ON GOOGLE WENT VIRAL. THE ADS, BASED ON AUTOCOMPLETE SEARCHES, REVEAL A RANGE OF NEGATIVE SENTIMENTS FROM STEREOTYPES TO OUTRIGHT DENIAL OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS. THE AD SERIES IGNITED A GLOBAL ONLINE DEBATE AND GRABBED THE ATTENTION OF INTERNATIONAL MEDIA.

3

b) Leverage and extend the use of existing corporate relationship management software to create a system by which all contact with a partner organization is visible to other staff members of UN Women, linking it to the results tracking and financial reporting systems. Each UN Women business unit should be aware of the interactions between a partner and other business units in UN Women.

c) Specific skills, knowledge and practices are required by leaders at all levels of the organization if UN Women is to effectively work through partnerships. In the medium term, establish a set of competencies, components of leadership training programmes, and certifications focused on strategic partnership management for UN Women staff members. Ensure that these are specified in appropriate terms of reference, including directors, representatives and their deputies, and recognize the practice of these competencies in the staff review process.

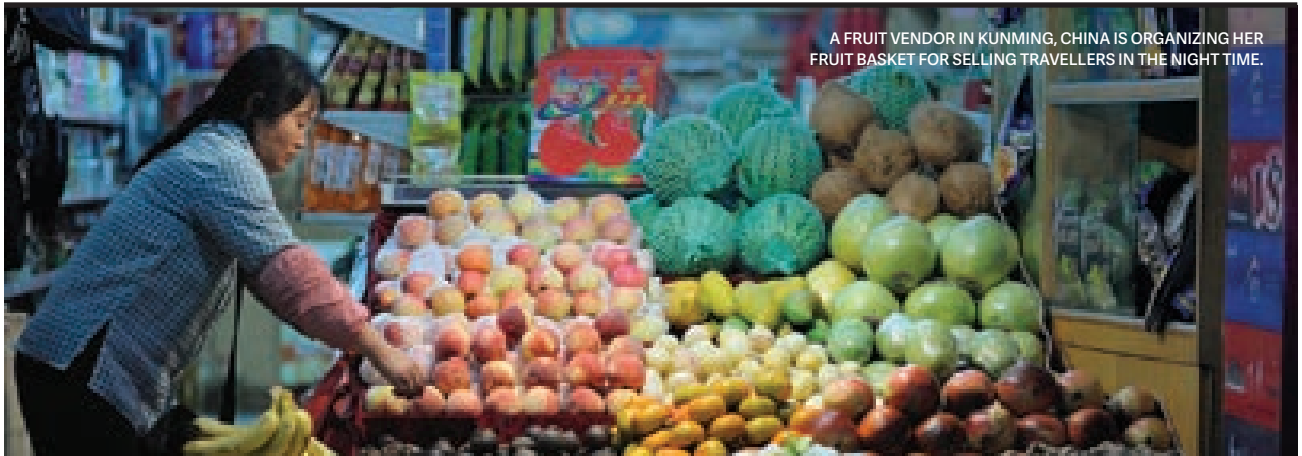
Undertake a systematic process of integrating strategic partnership considerations in the day-to-day workflow and tools used by leaders, managers and staff at all levels.

It is recommended that while developing the overall framework for partnerships, UN Women undertake a review of operations tools, rules and processes to assess their impact on and relevance to strategic partnerships. Prior to such a review, the following three priority areas should be addressed.

Operational tools and modalities for strategic partnerships. UN Women has already explored options for adjusting partnership modalities in line with recommendations from the Joint Inspection Unit and others. The evaluation recommends that UN Women moves forward with revising partnership modalities with a view to fostering long-term gender-responsive partnerships in the field by implementing the Joint Inspection Unit recommendation to consider: “developing and adopting small-scale IP [Implementing Partner] agreements in line with

appropriate delegation of authority; and whether a grant agreement would be useful in addition to such a small-scale agreement.” In addition to establishing a new small-scale funding agreement and/or grants mechanism that is appropriate to supporting small civil society organizations, UN Women is recommended to amend the existing project cooperation agreements to include a mutual accountability framework (with monitoring tools) in which UN Women and strategic implementing partners share accountability for both processes and results.

Indicators for partnership in the strategic plan integrated framework. Both parts of the integrated framework, the development results framework and the organizational effectiveness and efficiency framework, should be amended to reflect the findings of this evaluation.



A FRUIT VENDOR IN KUNMING, CHINA IS ORGANIZING HER FRUIT BASKET FOR SELLING TRAVELLERS IN THE NIGHT TIME.

4

Monitoring and reporting requirements for partnerships. The following changes are recommended:

a) Strategic partnerships and strategic implementing partners that are (or may be) covered by multiple governing documents (for example, a series of memorandums of understanding or a series of project cooperation agreements) should include within their results frameworks cumulative outcome indicators that are designed to capture the long-term contribution of the partnership to its ultimate goal (and not only outcomes that can be achieved within the time frame covered by each individual agreement).

b) Take concerted steps to minimize the burden of reporting and auditing on women's civil society organizations through the adoption of more nuanced risk-based requirements.

c) Consider commissioning an annual survey of all UN Women partners and partnerships to collect data on perceptions, the functioning of partnerships, lessons and hopes.

Further leverage UN Women's experience in using strategic partnerships to convene and mediate between different world views by shaping multi-stakeholder spaces and platforms for dialogue and innovation; this requires changes in incentive structures from both donors and within UN Women systems.

At the global level, UN Women has made effective use of multi-stakeholder strategic partnerships to advance its normative agenda. Yet country case studies and partnership mapping reveals that most partnerships (in terms of numbers) are currently bilateral. This creates a challenge in focusing management time on a few more strategic partnerships, something that the Flagship Programme Initiative should help to address. In the future, it is recommended that a greater proportion of partnerships should be held within multi-stakeholder platforms, shaping these to allow for creative

tension and innovation to further enhance returns.

UN Women should consider where progress can be achieved by *combining bilateral partnerships into multi-stakeholder partnerships, winding down partnerships that are not working as planned, and carefully considering the cost-benefits of additional partnerships.* Priority should be given to partnerships that integrate multiple dimensions of UN Women's mandate.

The current incentive structures in the donor system and in UN Women work against fully adopting such an approach: bilateral

Managing the tensions between world views can become a key competency and value-proposition of UN Women



5

partnerships are more predictable and efficient regarding fundraising for UN Women, spending according to plans and achieving outputs. As a consequence, partnerships are likely to remain fragmented without an explicit change in these incentive structures.

UN Women can do its part by revisiting its own *incentives structures*, especially for country representatives, to recognize and reward managers for progress towards two new objectives:

a) Demonstrating contribution towards a sustainable outcome that is beyond the ability of UN Women or its partner to achieve if acting alone, and, therefore, indicates the realization of an effective strategic partnership.

b) Demonstrating the generation of an innovative approach to advancing women's human rights by a diverse multi-stakeholder partnership, thereby indicating an ability to creatively manage tensions between partners with different world views.

Extend UN Women's global approach to movement-building to country-level work with CSOs to address the core capacity of women's organizations to hold governments to account for national implementation of international GEEW commitments, especially Agenda 2030.

This evaluation has reconfirmed the criticality of UN Women's relationship with women's civil society to advancing GEEW within the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Beijing Platform for Action. At the country level, UN Women needs to work with women's civil society to continue the strategic shift away from focusing on bilateral implementing partnerships towards movement-building in a way that addresses genuine concerns over insecure resources, overstretched capacity and reducing political space for action by:

a) Supporting country offices, regional offices and global units to

establish multi-year funding pipelines and to advocate to donors on the importance of providing strategic partners from civil society with core (un-earmarked) funds.

b) Providing regular opportunities for structured and open dialogue between the leadership of UN Women and women's civil society.

c) Building the ownership and commitment of the leadership of the Trust Funds (both within UN Women and the wider UN system) as a visible model that symbolizes UN Women's commitment to protect and build the women's movement as an independent actor with inherent value.



6

Address the dual relationship with private enterprises and public companies as both funders and a target of advocacy by establishing clearer coordination between the policy, programme and private-sector teams to ensure an integrated approach to managing strategic partnerships and gradually diversifying relationships beyond corporations to individual donors and foundations.

UN Women's corporate partnerships are making an important contribution to extending influence and advocacy for GEEW into new spaces. However, they require significant human resources to steward, and the legacy of structural decisions during UN Women's foundation means that a need exists for greater transparency around roles, incentives and responsibilities for fundraising and programming activities. While defining the appropriate roles and responsibilities for corporate sector engagement, as outlined under Recommendation 2, UN Women should consider the following:

a) Move responsibility for the Women's Empowerment Principles and other substantive functions to the Bureau of Policy and Programme

to strengthen work on supporting demand and capacity for internal change in the discourse and practice of the corporate sector.

b) Enable the Strategic Partnerships Division to coordinate communication with corporate partners by integrating inputs and requests from across the house.

c) Disaggregate and articulate different types of corporate

partnerships, with appropriate levels of due diligence processes established for each category. Establish pre-approved mechanisms for engaging "corporate friends of UN Women", such as through signing-up to campaigns or running employee-giving schemes that require lower levels of due diligence and can be approved by regional offices (thereby relieving pressure on the central Headquarters' due diligence function).

d) Strengthen support to National Committees and field offices to diversify corporate partners and to place greater emphasis on building relationships with individual donors and foundations.

UN Women's corporate partnerships are making an important contribution to extending influence and advocacy for GEEW into new spaces.

A LOCAL MARKET VENDOR ON A MOTOR-BIKE SELLS FOOD AND VEGETABLES TO LOCAL FISHERMEN IN THAILAND.



7

Identify and address barriers to country-level coordination of relationships with strategic partners that work with multiple UN entities.

UN Women has an important leadership role to play in joint action with other UN entities to address practical barriers to UN coordination of strategic partnerships, especially with regard to advancing GEEW through the implementation of Agenda 2030. Exercising this leadership role effectively requires greater internal UN Women coordination between partnerships, coordination, intergovernmental, executive offices and programme teams to be able to:

a) Harmonize the Flagship Programme Initiative theories of change with the key models and theories of sister agencies to

better provide the basis for joint programmes and advocacy initiatives.

b) Encourage, through UN Women's presence in the UN Country Team, joint management of relations and programming with strategic partners that are common to multiple UN entities to maximize synergies and benefit from the comparative advantage of other entities.

c) At the global level, strengthen the roles and responsibilities of the UN Women Working Group on Agenda 2030 comprising of representatives from partnership, coordination, intergovernmental, executive offices and programme teams.

UN Women has an important leadership role to play in joint action with other entities to address practical barriers to United Nations coordination of strategic partnerships.

8

Establish a model for a strategic partnership between UN Women and the various agencies within a Member State that supports coordination between the role of that state in intergovernmental processes, regional mechanisms, global and local donorship, and the global economy.

UN Women often maintains multiple avenues and levels of partnership with different parts of a Member State's bureaucracy, including its delegations, development agencies and national women's machinery. On some occasions there is scope to more precisely define how these multiple connections might be appropriately coordinated within the framework of a strategic partnership. It is also necessary to explore how the work of UN Women National Committees and Groups of Friends can better complement the role of UN Women offices.

PARTNERING IN ACTION

The Coca Cola Company & UN Women in Brazil

Despite many challenges along the way, The Coca Cola Company and UN Women in Brazil have developed a successful model for public-private partnership, focusing on the value chain and institutional change. This has ultimately led to the achievement of results as well as promotion of the Women's Empowerment Principles in the Brazilian context based on the TCCC model.

The partnership between UN Women and The Coca Cola Company (TCCC) is a global agreement between the two organizations at the level of their headquarters, supporting programmes in three pilot countries: Brazil, Egypt and South Africa. Funding for the three-year programme, (beginning in 2013) from The Coca Cola Institute is USD 3,974,355 globally, including USD 1,070,000 for Brazil. For TCCC, the initiative is part of its “5by20” commitment to enable the economic empowerment of 5 million women entrepreneurs across its value chain worldwide by 2020. For UN Women, the project contributes to strategic

plan outcome: Women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development.

Overall, the project has been viewed by TCCC representatives as highly successful in both its outreach to cooperatives in the value chain, and corporate level commitments. Some results include:

- *Recycling cooperative members are sharing their knowledge on gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights* within their communities beyond the Cooperatives themselves, and bringing about discussions in families and communities; the same is

true for first-time job seekers and women entrepreneurs, the other groups targeted by the programme.

- *Policies internal to the TCCC have changed:* for example, a study on women's advancement undertaken internally showed that a key element for advancement in management was international work experience, or at least experience in different parts of Brazil. Women were less likely to have this for family reasons. TCCC changed its policy to allow employees to use the relocation budget instead for flexible travel and a degree of home working to allow staff to take out of town postings.
- *In collaboration with the Brazilian Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS), elaboration of a gender specific chapter in the publication “Sustainable Procurement Manual”, to support awareness raising on gender*

“We realized we didn’t know what gender equality means and we had to learn from UN Women that gender equality and human rights is important for empowerment of women – so the partnership allowed us to deliver more tangible results to our beneficiaries.”

— TCCC STAKEHOLDER

sensitive procurement policies. This is the standard procurement manual used by Members of the Brazilian Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS) - representing 70 companies in Brazil, accounting for 40% of the gross domestic product and directly employing over a million people.

- *During the evaluation period Brazil ranked 2nd in the world with 82 Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) signatories.* Through the outreach pillar and leveraging their networks to promote commitment to the WEPs, there have been 19 new signatories in Brazil.

- *During the partnership period TCCC created a diversity council that advises senior leadership team in barriers for women, including Afro-Brazilians.* According to senior management, the internal results are better than expected and they are looking at ways to accelerate the process.

- TCCC’s partnership with UN Women helped to transform their earlier more superficial approach to empowerment of women in the value chain, to one with a *deeper, rights based feminist analysis*. This has transformed the way TCCC approached its work.

LESSON LEARNED

UN women’s organizational processes and those of private sector partners are not well synchronized and need to be carefully considered and addressed at the planning stage of partnership.

Weak coherence between the world views and organizational cultures of partners can result in high partnership management costs and conflict between partners. Intensive involvement, honesty and commitment of management teams from both partners (at both the global and country level) was necessary to successfully align very different organizational mindsets, systems, expectations, understanding, visions, and language. This process took about two years of learning and adjusting. The lessons from this experience are clearly shaping the current processes of developing new corporate partnerships, and there is a strong case for ensuring such knowledge is promulgated through both the Regional Architecture and to women’s civil society through the Civil Society Advisory Groups.

Value added of the partnership

THE COCA COLA COMPANY

Enriched equality commitment of 5by20 with gender analysis capacity

UN Women’s technical expertise in GEEW; deepened understanding of gender equality and human rights

UN Women provides capacity to translate principles into practical applications and training

Leadership role in promoting WEP, good reputation as progressive employer

UN WOMEN

Opportunity to pilot new kind of partnership in WEP, with company that already has a commitment

Extensive reach of TCCC to regions and beneficiaries UN Women could not reach alone

‘Cool’ factor, innovation, and ability of Coca Cola to reach youth

Ability to influence more companies through WEP component of the project

METHODOLOGY

How we evaluated strategic partnerships

The evaluation approach was three-pronged, comprising utilization-focused, theory-driven (realist evaluation) and gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches.

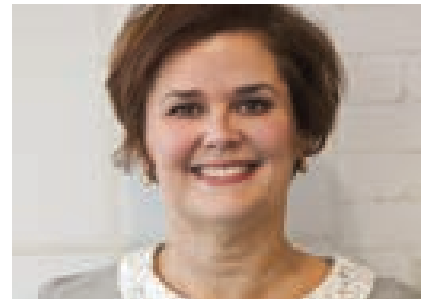
The evaluation established three main components/lines of evidence:

- a) UN Women's overall partnership approach analysis (Headquarters assessment):* Including an assessment of five selected strategic partnerships at the global level.
- b) Portfolio analysis:* An in-depth analysis of 30 UN Women multi-country office/regional office/country office partnerships and 5 headquarters partnerships, selected on the basis of their representativeness of UN Women's partnerships portfolio and for their learning potential.
- c) Decentralized case studies:* Five case studies of selected strategic partnerships in Kenya, India, Egypt, Brazil and Georgia.

The evaluation used different qualitative data collection methods:

- a) Document review* of more than 500 documents.
- b) Semi-structured interviews, focus groups and workshops* with 261 stakeholders (212 women and 49 men) at the global, regional and country levels.
- c) Social learning* that included the launch of a survey via the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office Twitter account, which resulted in 1,650 Twitter followers.

Data were analysed using a combination of established qualitative methodologies. Key stakeholders actively contributed to the review and validation of evaluation findings at the global, regional and country levels. At the global level, the Internal and External Evaluation Reference Groups were consulted at key moments of the evaluation processes and evaluation deliverables were shared with them for comments and feedback. In the five case study countries, the evaluation team validated preliminary findings through an end of mission meeting with an expert panel and the office staff. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy and the UN Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System.



EXPERT'S VIEW
Sarah Earl

As a formative evaluation, the users and intended uses of this evaluation were explicitly identified as internal to UN Women. A strength of the evaluation process was the engagement of them throughout. The design of the evaluation was realistic, practical and more than adequate to respond to the evaluation questions. The approach recognized the limitations of documentation and employed a variety of methods to gather evidence from a wide variety of sources. The inclusion of innovative methods like the use of twitter is a good example of how the evaluation looked to engage widely and get a variety of perspectives. The evaluation grappled with the complexity of the topic of strategic partnerships and provided nuanced understandings of the issues. Depending on the evaluation approach, values are not always easy to include and assess. This evaluation framed the sections on feminist values in a very solid way. The evaluation provided many concrete and actionable conclusions and recommendations that the organization can use to further institutionalize and improve its strategic partnership work.

DATA COLLECTED FOR THIS EVALUATION

261 Interviews

UN, Govts, CSOs, Corps, Academia, and others



Case Studies

5 Decentralized Case Studies

2 COs/ROs
2 COs
1 MCO
1 HQ assessment

Portfolio review

35 Strategic Partnerships

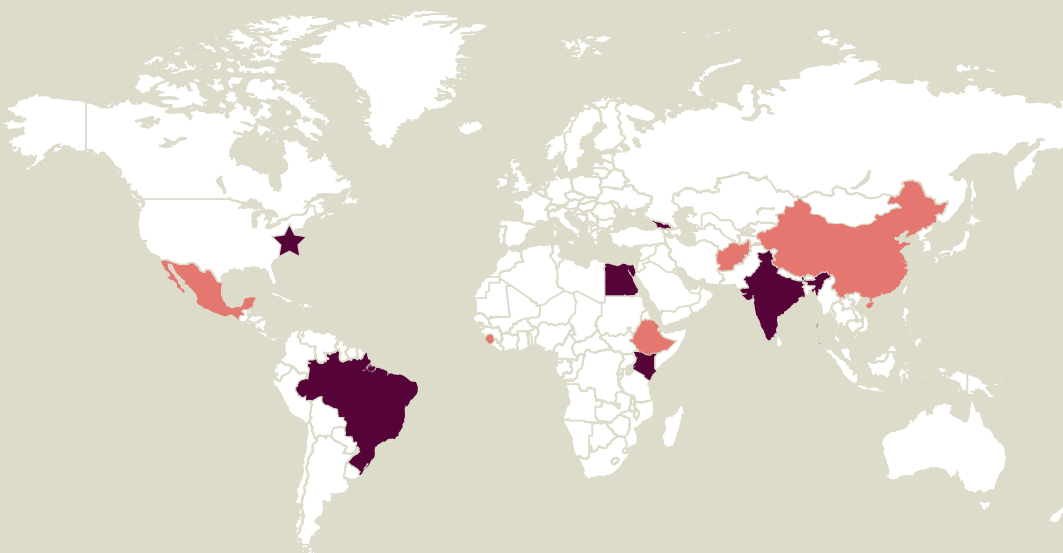
5 HQ
15 from 5 case studies
15 from 5 additional countries

500+ documents

Social Learning

1,650 twitter followers
600 + readers, online discussion

Geographic distribution of the overall sample of partnerships



Partnerships included in the sample

HQ/GLOBAL LEVEL

The Coca Cola Company (TCCC)

European Union (EU)

UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Post 2015 Civil Society Engagement

HeforShe Impact 10X10X10

CASE STUDY COUNTRIES

Kenya

Kenyatta University, International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC), Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA)

India

Jagori, National Foundation for India, Ministries of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj

Egypt

Government of Japan, CARE Egypt, League of Arab States (LAS)

Georgia

Ministry of Defense, Public Defender's Office, TASO Foundation

Brazil

The Secretariat of Policies for Women (SPM), TCCC; Promundo

PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS

Ethiopia

Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs; Africa Union Commission – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; Ethiopian Orthodox Church – Development Wing and Dire Dawa Bureau of Women's Affairs

China

Cheung-Kong Graduate School of Business; Communication University; Proya Cosmetics CO.

Sierra Leone

Statistics Sierra Leone, Women in the Media, United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response

Afghanistan

Kath Media Consulting Services, Afghan Women's Network, Ministry of Finance of Afghanistan

Mexico

Pineda Covalin, Alliance of Indigenous Women of Central America and Mexico, INMUJERES



IN FOCUS

Ms. Lakshmi Puri

*Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations & Deputy Executive Director,
Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau*

It is important to take time to reflect on how we as UN Women can play a vital role in realizing the vision for gender equality and women's empowerment, which is central to a world order of democracy, peace, justice and equality. Evaluation allows us to take stock of our collective achievements and to set out the challenges in navigating these passages and reflect on our aspirations for years to come.

Creating the new normal of gender equality and women's empowerment and an enduring commitment to this cause among all major stakeholders and constituencies requires transformational partnerships and movement building. Despite the very limited resources, both financial and human capital, UN Women has been able to build partnerships with a variety of sectors and bring about transformative change, the impact we have had through leveraging these partnerships has exponential potential. UN Women has

taken this up imaginatively and boldly to not only work with the women's movement and the like-minded, but also with strategic partners from across civil society, government, UN system, private sector, academia, celebrities, foundations, media, sports, youth, men and boys, faith actors and with key political - economic / geographical / regional groupings of countries. UN Women has shown extraordinary convening power, in terms of mobilizing government actors and building partnerships at all levels.

Much of our future success as the driver of normative progress at all levels, as a center of excellence and knowledge hub, as a credible global advocate and a catalyst for operational impact, and the translation of normative commitments to make for real change for women and girls rests on our ability to nourish, grow and leverage the power of the women's and the broader feminist movement. This becomes an even greater priority in the renewed historic role we will be required to play in the challenging political contexts in the years ahead. I would like to thank the evaluation team and UN Women Independent Evaluation Office for conducting this timely evaluation and assure stakeholders that UN Women will be taking the recommendations forward.

LEARN MORE ABOUT GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION



READ TRANSFORM

ISSUE 1

Promoting gender-responsive evaluation systems

ISSUE 2

The economic empowerment issue

ISSUE 3

The normative support work issue

ISSUE 4

The meta-analysis issue

ISSUE 5

The gender mainstreaming issue

ISSUE 6

Gender Responsive Evaluation:
A call for action to leave no one behind

ISSUE 7

The UN coordination mandate issue

ISSUE 8

What can we learn from UN Women evaluation?

ISSUE 9

Regional Architecture Evaluation

ISSUE 10

The Strategic Partnerships Issue

www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation/news

HIRING MANAGERS: LOOKING FOR EVALUATORS WITH GENDER EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERTISE?

Find them on the **GENDER EVALUATION CONSULTANT DATABASE**

➤ **evalconsultants.unwomen.org**

The Gender Evaluation Consultants Database aims to connect consultants that have reported a combination of experience applying human rights and gender equality analysis to evaluation, with hiring managers seeking professionals with those areas of expertise.

