



EVALUATION BRIEF



WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP: A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT AND A POTENTIAL DRIVER FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

Corporate evaluation of UN Women's contribution to Women's Political Participation and Leadership

April 2018

© UNMIT/Martine Perret - Voters turn out in Dili to cast their vote for the parliamentary elections in the morning. A voter displays proof of having expressed her voice at the ballot box in Timore-Leste's parliamentary elections. Photo by UNMIT/Martine Perret. 7 July 2012

Although women's political participation and leadership has increased around the globe, women are still under-represented in political life. Promoting women's political participation and leadership is vital because it improves outcomes at all societal levels. Research has shown that having women in public decision-making roles and engaging in political life fosters economic growth and results in policies beneficial to women, children, families and their respective communities and countries. Improving women's political participation and leadership has been recognized by the international community as critical for achieving not only gender equality, but also sustainable development, through the inclusion of a specific target within the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal 5.

As part of its implementation of the UN Women Corporate Evaluation Plan, the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service conducts corporate evaluations. These provide impartial, independent overviews of key areas of UN Women's work with a view to promoting accountability, learning and performance improvement. The **corporate evaluation of women's political participation and leadership** presented in this Brief provides six conclusions and six recommendations to further strengthen UN Women's contribution in this thematic area.

What did the evaluation conclude?

CONCLUSION #1 The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs framework's systemic approach situates UN Women as the key UN actor

and thought leader for providing integrated policy advice on women's political participation.

CONCLUSION #2 In order to be 'fit-for-purpose' to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, UN Women would benefit from adopting a thematic lens for strengthening its internal capacities and resources to match desired impact with delivery capacity on women's political participation.

CONCLUSION #3 UN Reform efforts provide new opportunities as well as challenges to implementing UN Women's coordination mandate on women's political participation, especially at the country level.

CONCLUSION #4 Although UN Women has demonstrated effectiveness across its normative and operational work, it could increase the level and sustainability of its results by adopting a more systemic and holistic approach to its programmatic work.

CONCLUSION #5 UN Women needs to prioritize and increase its efforts to address marginalization within its women's political participation work.

CONCLUSION #6 Work on social norm change to support women's political participation work is a promising, yet under-developed area of programming for women's political participation.

How can UN Women improve?

PRIORITIZATION CAPACITY

RECOMMENDATION #1 In a context of wide-ranging demands and limited resources, strengthen its prioritization capacity at the country level to contribute strategic and sustainable results on women's political participation.

UN COORDINATION

RECOMMENDATION #2 To strengthen implementation of its coordination mandate, establish a clear division of labour with other UN agencies around potentially overlapping mandates; and provide thematic operational guidance on planning and implementing its coordination role at the country and regional levels.

THEMATIC CAPACITY

RECOMMENDATION #3 Develop a long-term women's political participation capacity-strengthening plan to enhance its ability to deliver results and meet stakeholder requests.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

RECOMMENDATION #4 Invest in a thematic resource mobilization approach that builds on existing innovative, flexible, and longer-term funding mechanisms and that addresses regional priorities.

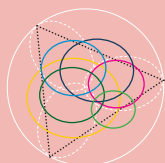
LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

RECOMMENDATION #5 Consistently prioritize 'Leave No One Behind' within its WPP programming at the global, regional, and country levels, and build an evidence-base that can feed into its global normative and advocacy work.

SOCIAL NORMS

RECOMMENDATION #6 Invest in new programming on social norms change, which complements UN Women's political participation work and develop effective methods to monitor and report on progress in the long-term.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY



Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for

Gender equality, Environments and Marginalized voices
(ISE4GEMs)

DATA COLLECTED FOR THIS EVALUATION

500+ documents

397 stakeholders consulted
UN, governments, CSOs, donors, others

6 cases:

- constitutional and legal reform, including temporary special measures (TSM)
- inclusive electoral processes
- parliamentary support
- violence against women in politics
- local government
- leadership

Portfolio analysis and sample:

43 countries in the broad sample **24** countries in the in-depth sample

6 in-country field visits
(Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Malawi, Mexico, Pakistan and Zimbabwe)

6 regions covered
Western and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, Americas and the Caribbean, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia (remotely)

2 online surveys:

• 246 internal respondents **• 119** external respondents