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Evaluation

Review of Corporate Gender Equality Evaluations in the United Nations System

Summary

UN-Women, in consultation with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), EvalPartners and EvalGender, undertook a review of existing evaluations of corporate gender equality policies in the United Nations system to capture validated learning on gender mainstreaming undertaken prior to the implementation of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

The review broadly utilized the UN-SWAP framework to analyse evaluations undertaken by United Nations entities to enhance the relevance and use of the findings for future UN-SWAP implementation. While not an evaluation of the UN-SWAP framework or work done within it, this report's insights, conclusions and ways forward are organized around the six policy areas of the UN-SWAP: accountability; results-based management; oversight; human and financial resources; capacity development; coherence, knowledge management and communications.

The insights, conclusions and ways forward are expected to be used by United Nations entities to enhance gender equality policies, improve performance against the UN-SWAP framework, and improve corporate gender equality evaluation practice. More specifically, the insights, conclusions and ways forward will be used to inform UN-Women's efforts to support performance against the UN-SWAP process (e.g. through revision of technical notes, development of guidance, etc.) and for the refinement of 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.

1. Introduction

The year 2015 will see the adoption of a post-2015 development agenda that includes strengthening of global efforts to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW). Not only do the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a stand-alone Goal 5 on GEEW, but GEEW issues are considered cross-cutting within all the goals.

At the same time, the United Nations system is also taking steps to implement the United Nations General Assembly resolution (A/Res/67/226) on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) that called for United Nations entities to work collaboratively to enhance gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system. It also noted the importance of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) to promote more effective and coherent gender mainstreaming across the United Nations and the development of a United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on the System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

2. Purpose

This review of corporate gender equality evaluations in the United Nations systems¹ aims to inform the implementation of the SDGs and QCPR, by providing evidence on what works and what does not work in mainstreaming GEEW in United Nations entities. Its objective is to analyse the results of the corporate gender equality evaluations of United Nations entities completed in 2006 – 2014, the period between the endorsement of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) system-wide policy on GEEW and prior to the roll-out of the 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 United Nations system in GEEW.

Corporate gender equality evaluations are those evaluations that both meet the UNEG 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 United Nations 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 United Nations 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,

¹ The full review document with annexes is available at <http://gate.unwomen.org/>.

and other documents provide many good examples and report much progress made. However, these have not yet been validated by external and independent evaluation.

This review aims specifically to extract externally validated learning and good practices in achieving GEEW institutional results by United Nations entities prior to the implementation of the UN-SWAP. It also:

- Identifies gaps and challenges in gender mainstreaming practice where continued support may be needed
- Contributes to establishing the baseline of the pre-UN-SWAP period for any future evaluation of the UN-SWAP
- Identifies areas for refinement or revision of the UN-SWAP in its next cycle and
- Tests the UN-SWAP as an analytical framework for evaluation and informs methodologies for conducting future corporate gender equality evaluations

The findings are expected to be used by United Nations 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.

3. Methodology

The review was led by UN-Women, in consultation with UNEG², EvalPartners³ and EvalGender⁴. A structured search process identified 62 documents for potential inclusion in the review from the 69 United Nations entities meant to report against the 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 GEEW in the United Nations 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 CEB policy: accountability, results-based management, oversight, human and financial resources,

² <http://unevaluation.org/>

³ <http://www.mymande.org/evalpartners>

⁴ <http://www.mymande.org/evalgender>

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 United Nations entities.

4. Insights

Insights have been organized around the six policy areas of the UN-SWAP. Insights not neatly captured within any one of the policy areas are included in the subsection entitled ‘Other insights’.

4.1 Accountability

4.1.1 Gender equality policies

Insight 1: To further enhance the relevance and effectiveness of gender equality policies, United Nations entities should conceptually and operationally link them to corporate strategic plans.

Twelve evaluations within the portfolio assessed entity gender equality policies (in place for five to ten 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. Two factors seemed to hinder establishing such linkages between the two documents: 1) the conceptualization processes and time frames of the two documents are usually not aligned and 2) gender units’ locations

and roles within entities may not afford them entry points for engaging to establish such linkages.

Insight 2: Staff perception of the relevance of gender mainstreaming is strengthened when gender equality policies clearly articulate a link between GEEW results and the entity's overall development results.

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 GEEW 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 GEEW results and the development results that an entity aimed to achieve were made explicit within its gender equality policy.

Insight 3: While inclusion of overall goals for gender mainstreaming in gender equality policies is important, explicit theories of change and improved results logic would strengthen implementation even further.

Although gender equality policies included clearly articulated goals, none included an explicit theory of change that defined the pre-conditions 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.

4.1.2 Gender-responsive performance management systems

Insight 4: Establishing or, where they already exist, strengthening gender-responsive performance management systems would enhance 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 GEEW 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 GEEW.

4.2 Results management

4.2.1 Strategic planning

Insight 5: Gender analysis should be integrated in central strategic planning documents as well as 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.

4.2.2 Monitoring and reporting on GEEW results

Insight 6: Quality of monitoring and reporting data on GEEW can be strengthened by linking it to the entity's overall results management system.

Strong overall results management systems within entities translate to more robust management for GEEW 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 GEEW 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 GEEW 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 GEEW results was also strengthened.

Insight 7: Monitoring and reporting should be focused at outcome level, in addition to activity and output levels.

Seven evaluations provided information on GEEW 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 GEEW 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 GEEW results, as well as to issues related to actual implementation.

4.3 Oversight

4.3.1 Gender-responsive evaluation

Insight 8: Evaluations have the potential to act as credible sources of information on GEEW results, especially at the outcome and impact level, but are not yet doing so.

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 GEEW outcomes or impacts (or lack thereof).

Insight 9: Evaluations should enhance the analysis of the potential or actual linkages between GEEW institutional results and GEEW development results.

While GEEW 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 GEEW 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 United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) peacekeeping missions.

4.3.2. Gender-responsive auditing

Insight 10: Participatory gender audits, when conducted, increased understanding and commitment to GEEW that supported gender mainstreaming performance.

The participatory gender-responsive audit (PGA) 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 GEEW, 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.

4.3.3. Programme review

Insight 11: Programme review criteria should ensure the incorporation of specific GEEW criteria.

The review found that five entities' programme review processes included some level of attention to GEEW dimensions. However, GEEW-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 GEEW dimensions within designs were cited as an incentive factor for some entities, as was early support by gender units/advisers for design processes.

4.4 Human and financial resources

4.4.1 Gender architecture

Insight 12: Increased capacity of gender architectures would provide 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 (GFP) network. The central gender unit is normally responsible for developing entity gender policies and providing specialized technical assistance for its implementation. The GFP network normally consists of non-gender experts for whom GEEW is not a main responsibility.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for GFP networks and individual GFPs were rarely formalized and this created uncertainty about expected roles and responsibilities for achieving results. GFP networks were also predominated by junior staff members and/or staff who were already responsible for full job descriptions/workplans that were not scaled back once they were appointed as a GFP. 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 GFP networks were normally not reflected in budget allocation decisions or financial resource tracking systems.

Insight 13: Relatively small investments to establish field-based gender architectures within UN DPKO peacekeeping missions have generated significant progress towards achieving GEEW development results.

All three evaluations of DPKO peacekeeping missions provided evidence that investment in field-based gender units was effective in generating development results on GEEW. 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 GEEW 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 DPKO were all found to be important factors for success. However, the sustainability of the gains was found to have diminished when DPKO missions were discontinued and transition to the United Nations development system was completed.

Insight 14: United Nations entities have shown progress towards gender parity over time, but the factors that support or hinder its 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.

4.4.2 Organizational culture

Insight 15: United Nations entities put in place an array of supportive policies to promote GEEW, but their implementation and use within some entities remained limited, partly due to organizational culture.

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.

4.4.3 Financial resource allocation

Insight 16: Clear financial benchmarks would enhance investment in GEEW.

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 GEEW 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 GEEW financial benchmarks. At the system-wide level, a financial benchmark for GEEW 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 United Nations-managed funds in support of peacebuilding to projects whose principal objective is to address women's specific needs, advance gender equality or empower women. One entity had recommended a 20 per cent allocation of global, regional and country programme budgets for its efforts to achieve GEEW 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 GEEW, which was considered inadequate given its mandate.

4.4.4 Financial resource tracking

Insight 17: Financial tracking systems for GEEW should be fully developed to enhance effectiveness.

A robust system for tracking GEEW 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 GEEW 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.

4.5 Capacity development

4.5.1 Capacity assessment

Finding 18: Capacity assessments can make capacity development initiatives more effective.

There was no evidence that any entity in the portfolio had undertaken a staff capacity assessment on GEEW 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 GEEW 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.

4.5.2 Capacity development

Insight 19: Assessments of capacity development initiatives are needed to ensure their 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 GEEW, 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 GEEW 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.

4.6 Coherence, knowledge and information management

4.6.1 Knowledge-generation and communication

Insight 21: United Nations 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 GEEW 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 GEEW. 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: first, active GFP networks that met regularly to share experiences and practices; second, effective collaboration between gender units and communications units, even when communication plans are not in place.

4.6.2 Coherence

Insight 22: Future evaluation should better capture efforts to increase coherence.

Although system-wide policies and guidance on GEEW were referenced, the evaluations did not systematically assess coherence. Some limited examples were reported of in-country collaboration with other United Nations entities in Gender Theme Groups, in relation to work on the gender dimensions of the United Nations 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 GEEW 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 GEEW.

4.7 Other insights

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 (IASC) Gender Policy and Gender Marker) and United Nations entities have collaborated to provide operational support to gender mainstreaming in humanitarian operations, e.g. funding for the Gender Capacity Standby Project (GenCap) programme 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: United Nations entities with a strong rights-based approach orientation were found to be 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 GEEW appeared to be more accepted internally given that it is also at the core of the human rights-based approach.

5. Conclusions and ways 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. Although this review is based on evaluations dating from the pre-UN-SWAP period, it has generated insights or validated current understanding about mainstreaming gender equality that will be useful for the United Nations system; UN-SWAP reporting entities; UN-Women and UNEG.

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.

5.1 Accountability

Gender equality policies need to be further grounded and contextualized within United Nations 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 GEEW development results.

On the other hand, 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.

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

Given the limited evidence available on performance management systems on GEEW, an assessment of the effectiveness of such systems within United Nations 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 United Nations entity gender-responsive performance management systems to enhance learning and practice in this area and further develop or refine guidance based on the results.

5.2 Results-based management

United Nations entities need to 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 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: United Nations entities should strengthen the level and quality of gender analysis undertaken to inform strategic planning efforts at all levels, including through capacity development initiatives.

United Nations entities need to 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 GEEW 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 GEEW 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 GEEW 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: United Nations entities to explore challenges related to outcome-level monitoring and reporting on GEEW results and, to the maximum extent possible, link it to the entities' overall corporate monitoring system.

5.3 Oversight

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

More evaluative information is needed for accountability, learning and decision-making on gender mainstreaming by United Nations 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 GEEW institutional results lead to improved GEEW development results or development results in general.

Way forward: United Nations entities to 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.

United Nations entities would benefit from further methodological guidance for conducting corporate gender equality evaluations, including by 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- than outcome-level results and United Nations entities should address evaluability issues that

may affect the ability to assess GEEW outcome-level results. A review of gender-responsive evaluation systems within the United Nations 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 that can help guide such efforts.⁵

***Way forward:** UNEG and UN-Women Independent Evaluation Office should work together to develop methodological guidance and a sample ToR for corporate gender equality evaluation of United Nations entities.*

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

The review found the inclusion of GEEW 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 GEEW criteria for programme review processes that United Nations entities can adapt and tailor to their own contexts.*

5.4 Human and financial resources

United Nations entities' gender architectures need to be made 'fit-for-purpose' to drive gender mainstreaming institutionally.

The insights indicate that gender architectures within United Nations 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 GFP networks all need to be considered when developing such models.

⁵ The report can be found here: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/6/transform-issue-01>

Way forward: UN-Women to conduct an assessment of gender architectures within the United Nations system and develop potential gender architecture models to guide UN entities.

There should be a shift in focus from gender parity rates to a more in-depth analysis of the factors that support and impede greater gender parity, 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. United Nations entities should ensure usage of standard classifications from the Secretary-General's Annual Report on the Status of Women in the United Nations system for tracking gender parity.

Enhance actual implementation of supportive policies that promote GEEW in the workplace.

The insights indicate that staff were not making full or consistent use of supportive policies that promote GEEW (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 GEEW can be practically implemented and tracked, as well as promoting training for management and staff to address organizational culture in a more holistic manner.

United Nations entities need to establish clear financial benchmarks for GEEW allocations and commit to tracking of actual expenditures.

United Nations entities have been operating without clear financial benchmarks to guide allocations for GEEW. 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 the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) MDG and Gender Task Teams should continue to support the Finance and Budget Network to establish financial benchmarks for GEEW, utilizing UN-SWAP reporting information to guide decisions, and continue to support entities to improve application and use of the UNDG Gender Marker.

5.5 Capacity development

GEEW capacity development strategies need to be developed, resourced and implemented if United Nations 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 GEEW capacity development strategies.

5.6 Coherence, knowledge and information management

United Nations 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 to develop guidance for formal knowledge management strategies on GEEW.

More focus is needed on improving coherence on GEEW at 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 United Nations country team (UNCT) Performance Indicators on GEEW (“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 country level would also further strengthen the ability to assess the linkages between GEEW institutional results and GEEW development results.

***Way forward:** UN-Women to implement the recommendations of the desk review of the UNCT Performance Indicators on GEEW to further promote country-level coherence on GEEW.*

5.7 Other conclusions**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 GEEW 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:** United Nations entities working in humanitarian settings and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group on the Review of the IASC Gender Policy can take the insights of this review into consideration to devise new methods for integrating GEEW within their work modalities and develop further guidance, tools and performance indicators specifically for gender mainstreaming in humanitarian contexts.*

Annex A: Portfolio of evaluations reviewed⁶

1	Evaluation of WFP's 2009 Gender Policy	2014
2	Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in United Nations Peacekeeping Activities (MONUC/MONUSCO) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	2012
3	The Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in UNHABITAT	2011
4	Evaluation of FAO's role and work related to Gender and Development	2011
5	IFAD's Performance with regard to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	2010
6	OHCHR Performance in Gender Mainstreaming	2010
7	Mid Term Evaluation of UNFPA Strategic Plan Goal 3 - Gender Equality Phase I	2010
8	Mid Term Evaluation of UNFPA Strategic Plan Goal 3 - Gender Equality Phase II	2010
9	Changing the way UNHCR does business? An evaluation of the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy 2004-2009	2010
10	Thematic evaluation of gender mainstreaming in the UN Secretariat (Office of Internal Oversight Services)	2010
11	Strategy evaluation: Performance and progress in gender mainstreaming through the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2008-09	2009
12	Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation in UNICEF	2008
13	End-of-Term Evaluation of WFPs Gender Policy (2003-2007) Enhanced Commitments to Women to Ensure Food Security	2008
14	Evaluation of the Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategy in IOM	2006
15	Evaluation of Gender and Peacekeeping in Timor Leste	2006
16	Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming Work and impact of United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)	2006
17	Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in UNDP	2006

⁶ All reports are available at the UN-Women Gender Equality Evaluation Portal at <http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/>.