



AN EMPOWERED FUTURE

Corporate evaluation of UN Women's contribution to women's economic empowerment



Independent
Evaluation Office

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This report, and the overall evaluation process, was informed and enriched by the participation of more than 500 stakeholders, beneficiaries and partners, many of whom actively contributed to the development of evaluation findings by serving as reference group members, attending focus group discussions and workshops, completing comprehensive surveys, and filming the impact of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) work in their communities. Without the support and active participation of all these women and men involved in the consultation process, this report would not have been possible.

The evaluation was conducted by an external evaluation company with a large team and co-led by Jo-Anne Bishop and Joseph Barnes from Impact Ready. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Office team included Marco Segone, Inga Sniukaite and Florencia Tateossian.

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Corporate evaluation of UN Women's contribution to women's economic empowerment

New York, December 2014

QUICK REFERENCE

To aid reading, all findings in Section 3 are tabbed on the left hand side with the organizational business unit to which they are most relevant (policy, programme, coordination, partnerships and normative).



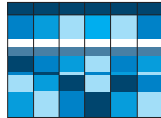
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ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CO	Country Office
CORT	Collaborative Outcomes Reporting Technique
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Group
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DRF	Development Results Framework
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EDGE	Evidence and Data for Gender Equality
EE	Economic Empowerment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGE	Fund for Gender Equality
FSQCA	Fuzzy Set Qualitative Comparative Analysis
GATE	Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (system)
GES	Gender Equity Seal
GRB	Gender-responsive Budgeting
HQ	Headquarters
HRBA	Human Rights-based Approach
HRC	Human Rights Council
IANWGE	Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OWG	Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals
PPGU	Planning and Programme Guidance Unit
PSLAC	Private Sector Leadership Advisory Council
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal

SWAP	System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality
TOC	Theory of Change
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UN	United Nations
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WEPs	Women's Empowerment Principles
WFP	World Food Programme

FOREWORD



The international community has identified women's economic empowerment as an objective that is critical not only for achieving gender equality but also for overall development and poverty reduction. Improving the economic

status of women can lead to better outcomes at the individual, family and community level, and has ripple effects across society. Research shows that women's economic empowerment affects not only the economic health of countries through increased productivity, but also overall health and well-being outcomes for the next generation. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has thus prioritized women's economic empowerment as an objective to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Office undertook this corporate evaluation to learn from the progress made so far towards achieving results, with the aim of informing future work. The evaluation covers all dimensions of women's economic empowerment work in UN Women, namely its mandates to support normative, operational and coordination work at the global, regional and country level.

The evaluation concluded that UN Women is well placed to influence women's economic empowerment at the global, regional and country level. Recent efforts by the entity to redefine its vision provide the strategic and conceptual framework needed to strengthen UN Women's comparative advantage in women's economic empowerment. The evaluation found that UN Women's normative mandate has enabled it to effectively influence international discourse and standards, despite having limited resources. In addition, it was realized that the operational work of UN

Women makes the most effective contribution where it identifies and addresses structural barriers and bottlenecks to women's realization of their economic and social rights. Furthermore, coordination and joint programming have made a cautious but important contribution to advancing women's economic empowerment within the UN system, especially at the country level.

Drawing on UN Women achievements and challenges identified in the evaluation report, the evaluation makes five recommendations aimed at strengthening the work in the women's economic empowerment: (a) UN Women should move decisively into the macroeconomic space and ensure stronger linkages between its micro and macro level work; (b) increased efforts are needed to maximize the value of UN Women partnerships, including through well-articulated strategies for civil society and private sector engagement; (c) UN Women work on women's economic empowerment should explicitly be based on, and guided by, a rights-based approach; (d) leadership should be strengthened across the organization to support work on women's economic empowerment; and (e) UN Women should equip and organize itself in line with becoming a knowledge-led organization.

We hope that this predominantly formative and forward-looking evaluation will be useful for UN Women management and Executive Board members in strengthening the work of UN Women and its partners on women's economic empowerment worldwide.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Marco Segone'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Marco Segone
Director, Independent Evaluation Office

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

This thematic corporate evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) contribution to women's economic empowerment (WEE) aimed to contribute to enhancing UN Women's approach to WEE for the implementation of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. The objectives of the evaluation were to: (a) assess the relevance of UN Women's WEE approach at global, regional and national levels, as well as UN Women's comparative advantage and added value in the WEE thematic area as compared with key partners; (b) assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of results, as defined in the 2011-2013 and 2014-2017 strategic plans, including the organizational mechanisms to ensure efficient linkages and feedback loop between Headquarters (HQ) and the field; (c) analyse how a human rights-based approach (HRBA) and gender equality principles are integrated in WEE areas of work; (d) identify and validate lessons learned, good practice examples and innovations of work supported by UN Women; and (e) provide actionable recommendations with respect to UN Women's WEE strategies and approaches.

The evaluation covered all dimensions of UN Women's work, namely its mandates to support normative and intergovernmental, operational and coordination work at global, regional and country levels between 2011 and the first quarter of 2014. The evaluation was predominantly formative and forward-looking and focused on learning from UN Women experiences in order to better inform planning and programming as well as the strategic processes currently underway within UN Women in relation to WEE. A complementary summative approach was also used to ensure that UN Women progress to date and accomplishments on WEE were well-documented and understood and enable lessons learned to be distilled. Four main evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness,

organizational efficiency, and integration of human rights and gender equality principles in programme planning, implementation and monitoring) provided the analytical framework for the evaluation.

The evaluation was conducted by an external independent team between May 2014 and December 2014 and managed by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), with the active involvement of internal and external reference groups and an evaluation advisory group.

METHODS

A comprehensive and multi-faceted approach was designed for the evaluation that corresponded to the purpose and objective of the evaluation, was informed by discussions with key evaluation stakeholders during the inception phase and aligned with United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) standards for evaluation in the UN system.

As part of the evaluation's theory-based approach, the evaluation team used UN Women's own understanding of what makes change happen as the starting point for its investigation by reconstructing an implicit and summative theory of change (TOC) that served as the main conceptual framework for the evaluation. Recognizing that gender relations are context specific, country-level summative TOC frameworks were also developed in cooperation with UN Women during the five country case studies and used to assess progress and results of the country offices (COs).

In the design and conduct of the evaluation, human rights and gender-responsive approaches were applied. This involved analysis of UN Women's WEE approaches, programme design and implementation, and the extent to which they have been informed and guided by international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights.

The evaluation team used advanced participatory approaches to engage more than 500 stakeholders throughout all phases of the evaluation. During the inception phase, evaluation stakeholders (particularly end users of the evaluation) participated in interviews and focus group discussions with the evaluation team to share their expectations and needs related to the evaluation products and process. In order to reach an extended number of stakeholders, online surveys were designed and administered, in which more than 60 internal and external stakeholders participated. For the data collection phases at the country level, evaluation stakeholders were actively involved in contributing to the findings and recommendations of the case study through a participatory and innovative collaborative outcomes reporting technique (CORT) process that followed participatory principles and emphasized the voice of women and other community members in assessing change. The use of a participatory video approach during one of the country case studies also supported the integration of a gender equality and human rights approach by ensuring that the views of excluded groups of women were represented and actively involved in the evaluation and learning activities.

In the analysis, a mixed-methods approach was applied, involving a blend of qualitative and quantitative data and analysis methods through triangulation.

During the desk phase, the evaluation team conducted a comprehensive desk review of more than 300 documents and a portfolio analysis of a representative sample of 27 UN Women COs. Both reviews focused on the results logic and achievements of UN Women programmes and initiatives related to its normative, coordination and operational mandates. As part of a fieldwork phase, six case studies were completed: one at the global level and six at the country level (Bolivia, Jordan, Moldova, Nepal, Zimbabwe and South Africa).¹

Data for 100 indicators was collected from all 27 portfolio countries and processed using a technique called

fuzzy sets qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). Similar to statistical methods, fsQCA identifies which variables, and combinations of variables, are most frequently associated with UN Women being effective in a country.

The results of the fsQCA were combined with other analyses (including organizational capacity assessment, social network mapping, and task/role analysis) in a technique called contribution analysis. Contribution analysis systematically considers all the alternative explanations for the changes that have been observed and attempts to exclude these to build a case for the contribution that UN Women has made.

CONTEXT

The international community has identified WEE as an objective that is critical not only for gender equality but also for overall development and poverty reduction. Improving the economic status of women can lead to better outcomes at the individual, family and community levels, and has ripple effects across society. WEE affects not only the economic health of countries through increased productivity, but also overall health and well-being outcomes for the next generation, and better outcomes for institutions and policy choices.

Globally, and within UN Women, WEE is an evolving and complex concept, where there have been tensions between rights-based and instrumental approaches to women's empowerment. WEE concepts and discourse have been influenced by a number of factors, including the recognition that a precondition of WEE is gender equality in capabilities (such as the right to health and education), as well as the constraints imposed by the external environment, such as the degree of societal inequality and the functioning of the macroeconomy. Further, power differences between women and men and the persistence of gender stereotypes are considered to be part of the scope of WEE.

UN Women's specific mandate on WEE is derived from a range international standards and normative

¹ The study in South Africa was more limited in scope and involved a rapid assessment of UN Women's partnership with The Coca-Cola Company in South Africa.

frameworks including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995); relevant outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), such as agreed conclusions and specific resolutions, including the resolution on WEE (resolution 54/4, in 2010); and General Assembly resolutions related to women in development, the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas, and violence against women migrant workers.

WEE is one of UN Women's core thematic priorities and has been included as a stand-alone goal area within its current and past strategic plans. In 2013, WEE was the third largest area of investment for UN Women, representing more than 14 per cent of total expenditures. According to the UN Women Strategic Plan, its work on WEE falls broadly into five areas: (a) supporting legislation, policies and strategies to strengthen WEE and access to resources; (b) supporting gender-responsive infrastructure and services (transport, utilities, water, energy, etc.) to enhance women's sustainable livelihoods; (c) working with gender equality advocates to influence economic and labour policies and strategies; (d) supporting intergovernmental mechanisms to ensure global policy and normative frameworks for WEE are reaffirmed and deepened; and (e) working with the UN system and key international partners (including multi-lateral development banks) to strengthen coordination. UN Women also administers the Fund for Gender Equality (FGE), the only global fund exclusively dedicated to women's economic and political empowerment

UN Women's unique positioning is derived from its mandate. The various historical groundings of its work in the security, development and human rights pillars of the United Nations also provide an important context for UN Women's work in the area of WEE. There are important and timely opportunities for UN Women to contribute to current development priorities such as poverty reduction, the post-2015 development framework, and the Beijing +20 review and appraisal of the implementation of the declaration and its platform for action.

Against the backdrop of organizational change that includes the progressive establishment of UN Women as a new organization and arrival of a new executive director with a strong interest and vision for UN Women's WEE work, new opportunities and directions for the entity's WEE work have emerged. In the context of these emerging opportunities, UN Women has initiated important internal processes to review and reformulate its strategic vision and approach. This evaluation seeks to recognize and complement these ongoing processes by taking a formative perspective that seeks to build-off, inform, challenge and validate (as appropriate) UN Women efforts at improvement.

KEY FINDINGS

Relevance of UN Women work in WEE

While the work of the entity has been aligned with the Development Results Framework (DRF), these frameworks do not sufficiently capture the conceptual underpinnings of UN Women work on WEE. The challenges associated with establishing a clear and consensual vision and approach to WEE—both within the organization and with external stakeholders—have made it difficult to prioritize a consistent focus for work on WEE. This has resulted in a wide array of approaches to WEE, at both global and country levels, and has created challenges in aligning regional and country-level work with UN Women's emerging global priorities. For example, national contexts, resources at the country level, and the natural length of programme cycles has exacerbated a disconnect between evolving thinking at HQ level that UN Women should emphasize change at the macro (or economy-wide) level by addressing structural barriers to women's participation in labour markets and their ability to generate a livelihood in agricultural economies, while evidence from the portfolio review shows that 70 per cent of COs are still actively focusing on micro-level work that is not fully linked to supporting structural change. In this report, we refer to the *macroeconomy*, as well as the *macro-, meso-, and micro-level* and associated policies. *Macroeconomic policies* refers to the traditional tools of fiscal and monetary policy, while *macro-level*

policies refers to policies that have economy-wide effects, along with implications for employment, income, economic security, and overall well-being. *Meso-level policies* are those that affect change at the institutional level (such as laws on land title, rules on bank lending that ensure equitable access to credit, and policies and regulations to support gender-responsive budgeting [GRB] and engendering of national plans and strategies).

After assessing the literature and evidence from the case studies, the evaluation found that by remaining only, or mostly, at the micro-level in its country-level programming, UN Women is precluded or heavily restricted from proactively engendering strategies for future sources of job creation that meet decent work standards. In order to do this, UN Women needs to strengthen its internal expertise to contribute substantively to macroeconomic policy and influence structural change within national economies in the same way that it has acquired credibility and authority in leading a rights-based approach in its normative work.

In addition, there is a strong case for UN Women (including FGE) to shift away from micro projects that provide loans and grants to women towards supporting women at a collective level in identifying and addressing bottlenecks at the macro-level (through national and international policies, finance, institutions and legislation) that deny women (and poor men) economic opportunities, such as lack of access to finance, credit and markets. The entrepreneurial success of self-help groups, most of them comprising women, with policy support from the government and financial assistance from organized financial institutions in some countries can serve as a model.

While the different approaches to gender equality of, for example, Bretton Woods organizations (which generally emphasize an instrumentalist approach) and UN Women's rights-based thinking may be seen at odds, there is a potential comparative advantage for UN Women in this area—to articulate an alternative set of macroeconomic policies than are advanced

by the international financial institutions (IFI), which tend to dominate debates. Thus, UN Women's voice in expanding the menu of viable macroeconomic policy remedies that can promote the structural change needed to achieve gender equality could fill a noticeable void in the policymaking world.

The challenge of engaging with the IFIs extends beyond UN Women's limited capacity in the area of macroeconomics. To achieve this, UN Women will require a significant boost to its expertise at HQ, regional and country levels in macroeconomics and, more specifically, in advancing a rights-based approach in this work. UN Women and IFIs also operate from different schools of thought: IFIs follow neoclassical economics and UN Women as well as other UN entities use a heterodox framework. As a result, UN Women is well-positioned to advance an alternative perspective by collaborating with other UN agencies with expertise in the area of macroeconomics and macro-level analysis, such as United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). This grouping, which operates under a different paradigm than the International Monetary Fund (IMF), collectively has the right expertise and as such can have a more powerful voice in the fiscal space arena, crucial for WEE.

UN Women has recognized that, despite the increased importance given to WEE within the entity, it remains the least developed and conceptualized thematic area and has recently ramped up its efforts to redefine its vision and approach to WEE through a series of review processes, including the participatory development of an explicit TOC. These processes, which have been grounded in extensive use of robust evidence, analysis and data, and on substantive inputs from experts, have been widely welcome by internal and external stakeholders and also provide an opportunity for UN Women to be more forward looking in aligning its work with emerging meta-trends relevant for WEE, such as competition for skilled labour, urbanization and aging Organisation for Economic Co-operation

and Development (OECD) countries (see Table 3.1a in Finding 4 for a more detailed overview).

The effectiveness of UN Women work on WEE and the organizational coherence of its work in this area have been affected by staff turnover and capacity gaps in the economic empowerment (EE) section. As a consequence, work on WEE has been diffused across the organization with initiatives and programmes spearheaded by different parts of the organization. While this arrangement has created space for individual engagement and agency around WEE, it has also led to unclear and uncoordinated decision-making about UN Women's position on WEE at the normative level.

In its efforts to advance WEE, there appears to be significant scope for UN Women to do more at the country level in terms of fully valuing and strategically developing its relationship with the women's movement as a powerful extension of both parties' normative reach. There is also clear consensus within UN Women that greater efforts are needed to engage men and boys as allies within its operational and normative work, particularly at the country level, in order to increase understanding and cultural support for women's economic social and economic rights.

Through UN Women's well-established relationship with civil society organizations (CSOs), in particular the women's movement, and its privileged access and good relationships with governments, UN Women has significant political capital to play at the global, regional and country level through its important convening role. Compared to other UN agencies working on gender equality and women's empowerment, UN Women is also unique because of its triple mandate. While the expectation of what UN Women should do remains high, the expectation of what it can do in WEE has been lowered. Maintaining UN Women's mandate advantage will therefore increasingly come to depend on perceptions of how well it can deliver this leadership and the extent to which it can buttress its technical capacities (especially related to labour market, agricultural and macroeconomic policies) and also overcome challenges related to its structural funding gap.

UN Women's most significant contribution is its role in harnessing and disseminating knowledge and information related to WEE. Through the evaluation, the Knowledge Gateway was consistently held up a good practice, and has begun to position UN Women as a knowledge hub on WEE, enabling the exchange of information and practice amongst a diverse groups of stakeholders. UN Women has also played an important role in supporting efforts to create an enabling environment for WEE through increased work on evidence generation (supporting data, statistics, studies and evidence-based advocacy) and then transmitting this information to relevant actors to support and inform their operational work in this area. In further advancing this work, partnerships, particularly with academics and their organizations, have been effectively used by the entity to leverage expertise that is beyond its capacity.

The evaluation found significant interest by COs to work on women's access to educational opportunities (particularly vocational education and training in sectors linked to labour market demands and employment opportunities) and health. These are prime examples of areas where UN Women could be best served by shaping a new role as an "enabler" of those agencies that already work on these themes. For example, UN Women could approach education by identifying and supporting relevant work of other entities using its comparative advantage of gender equality and women's empowerment expertise.

UN Women's global effectiveness

A review of the available data for UN Women's Global DRF for Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan reveals that, where data is available, many of the intended outcome indicators are on track. At the level of global impact, the evaluation found an increase across the portfolio countries in the Economist's Women's Economic Opportunity Index 2010-2012 of a mean 2.0 points. A larger increase was identified for the same countries of +2.7 points in the Labour Policy and Practice indicator (EIU 2012). While the global data does include positive outcomes, these are the result of many factors of which UN Women's work is one

contribution. They also need to be considered in light of the disconnect between the results framework and the entity's emerging WEE priorities at a global level.

Related to normative results, evidence from the case study, global survey and analysis of relevant normative documents contains ample evidence that UN Women has contributed to strengthening the global enabling institutional framework for WEE. This has included its direct contribution towards the further development and implementation of existing global normative standards to advance WEE—including on unpaid care work, decent work, migrant and domestic workers, and rural women—and by contributing to the integration of WEE in the still evolving post-2015 development agenda. At the regional level, the organization has only recently started to develop institutional normative relationships, most particularly with the African Development Bank. While there is evidence of UN Women working within the normative frameworks of regional organizations, such as the Southern African Development Community and the European Union, there is no substantive evidence available to show that these have been developed with influence from UN Women. In terms of normative advances at the country level, the portfolio analysis showed that 70 per cent have conducted or are planning to initiate interventions to support the development of laws and policies to advance WEE, and more than 70 national level policies in 39 countries have already been engendered. Organizational monitoring and reporting systems can be strengthened to better capture how specific interventions have supported these policy changes.

In terms of coordination results, while there was some scoping of a system-wide approach to coordinating WEE, the consensus within UN Women and the wider United Nations Development Group (UNDG) agencies suggest that a more appropriate approach is mainstreaming EE into existing mechanisms, including using the existing System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality (SWAP) and scorecards. UN Women has played an important role in engendering the latest Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) report and recommendations through the

development of common positions across UN agencies. An analysis of the QCPR resolution (GA Resolution 67/226) confirms this. UN Women is also playing a role in the implementation of the recommendations of the QCPR of operational activities for development through the UNDG. At the country level, UN Women is playing a greater leadership role and exerting more influence within the UN system, in particular through joint programming and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (the majority of which encompass WEE). However, the evaluation found scope for considerable institutionalization, professionalization and knowledge management of the coordination function at the country level, particularly in combination with thematic expertise. The evaluation identified four areas of focus for developing UN Women coordination capacity: (a) broadening the current focus of HQ coordination (primarily on Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC] and UNDG) to expand engagement with the security pillar of the UN system; (b) seeking to include the Bretton Woods institutions within the core UN coordination function; (c) expanding coordination work with the regional economic commissions (beyond their inclusion in SWAP) to benefit from their research capacity and relationships; and (d) clarifying and communicating a common UN Women position on WEE across all coordination fora. Outside of UN coordination, the evaluation found that UN Women relationships with governments and women's organizations are attractive for many organizations that have resources and programming on WEE but lack connections (including the Bretton Woods institutions and the private sector) and that there is scope for UN Women to better understand and articulate this value proposition.

Regarding operational results, UN Women has provided at least 112,000 people (106,000 women) with capacity development training, 80,000 people (64,000 women) with enhanced access to information and services, and approximately 12,000 women with improved access to markets through direct interventions. The evaluation found that UN Women work on income generation and micro-credit has had limited effectiveness in supporting more holistic empowerment, including control of assets, decision-making

and climbing the value chain. Evidence from the case studies demonstrated that integration between the FGE and other UN Women operational work is only just beginning at the global level and that strengthening this integration is critical to future effectiveness. UN Women work in supporting statistical systems for WEE evidence, through the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) initiative at a global level, and the work of 14 COs has been met with both success and demands for more support. Among respondents to the UN Women internal survey, 82 per cent consider that UN Women can make one of its most significant contributions to WEE through engendering national economic statistics and statistical systems but that at the country level, it is one of the weakest areas of the entity's expertise and capacity. Further corporate guidance and support is needed in this area, and linkages with the global work being done through the EDGE initiative could provide an important opportunity to inform and advance regional and country-level efforts. At the global level, UN Women has identified climate change adaptation and mitigation as an emerging priority. There is a strong case to support this, especially considering the similar role of the global economic system in driving consumption-based climate change and entrenching the disempowerment of women. Better connecting these issues at the operational level could create a powerful narrative for UN Women and build off its normative contribution to Rio +20.

In terms of linking operational and normative work, the evaluation found that UN Women has been effective in communicating normative developments to the field and sharing relevant information. Further support is needed, however, to enable COs to support countries to translate the significant normative advances made in the area of WEE into legislative and policy change at the national level.

Regarding effectiveness of partnerships, the evaluation found that until very recently, UN Women has not systematically assessed the work of UN agencies and other international key actors on WEE, nor has it analysed its own comparative strengths and weaknesses in order to re-assess and re-adjust its own areas of interventions. Evidence from the case studies

and surveys suggests that UN Women should avoid taking the lead in everything and focus its efforts on supporting existing CSOs, institutions and relevant programmes. In the long run, this role as an advocate and a broker is more likely to place UN Women in a trusted position with the women's movement, extend its reach and impact, and (eventually) become a major channel for distributing resources to the sector. Regarding cooperation with the World Bank, the evaluation found that there is still not a well-defined framework for collaboration, integrating a shared understanding of each partner's potential added value to the advancement of WEE.

In terms of UN Women's partnership with the private sector, evidence from the case studies and surveys shows that ideological divergences exist inside the organization on the appropriateness of and about its ideal boundaries. The evaluation found that while these attempts are necessary, timely and have the potential to be pioneering, UN Women needs to ensure that its strategic and operational effectiveness demands greater shared ownership of objectives, conceptual clarity on modalities of engagement, and sensitive positioning regarding resource-mobilization.

Integration of a gender equality and human rights based approach

At the global level, there has been increased attention to understanding and unpacking the underlying causes of disempowerment, inequalities and discrimination and to understand how UN Women can contribute to redress them. Greater efforts are now needed to address the major structural causes of inequality through the entity's operational work at a country level. This includes addressing gender bias in labour markets and placing a greater focus on the overall goal of job creation, which not only benefits women but also reduces gender conflict by reducing job competition between women and men. This area is a fertile one for macroeconomic policy analysis, an area that UN Women could partner with other organizations within the United Nations. Moreover, a focus on improving women's access to vocational training, which can contribute to a reduction in job segregation

and increase women's access to better paid jobs, is an important area for focus.

UN development and economic bodies provide the most important opportunity for catalytic partnerships with UN Women in regard to the rights-based approach since these bodies adhere to such an approach. UN Women's comparative advantages include its membership within the UN system and its ability to influence this through its coordination mandate. UN Women's most relevant and strategic partnerships seem to lie with the economic and development offices and agencies such as the UNDESA, UNDP, and UNCTAD.

At the global level, there has been a more explicit adoption of a rights-based framework arguing for gender equality and a more transformative agenda grounded in feminist economics. There is also a stronger identified linkage between poverty and disempowerment and a clearer recognition that women and men in extreme poverty face a host of similar constraints, as well as gender-specific constraints. UN Women now needs to expand its efforts to enable more direct participation of excluded groups in higher level and country-level normative processes including rural, poor and marginalized women and also men and boys. In effectively applying a rights-based approach, it will be important for UN Women to adopt a systematic approach that links planned interventions with country-specific recommendations and conclusions of relevant treaty bodies, human rights experts and special rapporteurs. Strengthened efforts are now needed by UN Women to establish further partnerships and cooperation with other intergovernmental treaty bodies such as the Human Rights Council (HRC) and other special rapporteurs and working groups. One particular opportunity, in light of UN Women's increased engagement with the private sector and its work on the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) would be to seek out cooperation with the HRC Working Group on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business.

Organizational efficiency in a challenging context

The creation of UN Women and the merging of four different entities, each with its own culture and perspective, has been a period of enormous transition. On top of this transition, UN Women has also faced overwhelming expectations in terms of shaping and realizing its powerful triple mandate. This has created natural tensions between focusing on the future identity of UN Women and spending adequate time to effectively merge the preceding entities. Strongly held convictions on the appropriateness of Private Sector Leadership Advisory Council (PSLAC) are partly a manifestation of this incomplete cultural transition. The implication of this transitional context, recognized both internally and externally in the evaluation survey, is that UN Women has struggled to make full use of its strengths, such as convening capacity, authoritative voice, network of influence, neutrality, and "holding the torch" for women's issues. This issue is not unique to WEE—it is organizational—but is further compounded by the external environment of conflict and competition over economic philosophies.

For a young organization, UN Women has already established many of the elements of a results-based management system. The challenge UN Women now faces is to build on this infrastructure so as to better support learning and accountability for WEE. The evaluation found that many COs instinctively know what empowerment is, but remain unclear as how to measure it consistently, usefully or meaningfully. Other challenges include linking plans and results to human rights instruments and the absence of an indicator at the global level to aggregate progress of women towards the realization of specific economic, social and cultural rights.

WEE provides an important entry point for addressing all areas of UN Women work, including recovery, leadership, governance and HIV/AIDS. While there are important examples of cross-thematic work across the entity, survey results showed that a large major of internal stakeholders (91 per cent) felt that there is a need for better integration. One lesson for achieving

this is the importance of multidisciplinary work. This raises one future prospect of structuring the work of the organization not around thematic areas but around multidisciplinary teams with thematic communities of practice that cut across these.

The evaluation found that UN Women staff members across the organization have a wide variance in capacity and knowledge in the area of WEE and the internal survey identified the need for greater guidance and training in areas such as: (a) linking women to markets; (b) creating an enabling environment for WEE; (c) advocating for macroeconomic and meso- and macro-level policy changes; (d) statistical strengthening for WEE; and (e) women and technology. However, despite increased capacity needs, there has been an ad hoc approach to informal learning and sharing within UN Women in regard to WEE, which seems to be linked to a fear of acknowledging failure and an unresolved organizational approach (i.e., a model for how new knowledge about WEE is created).

While the EE section has been focused on re-establishing thought leadership on the organization's TOC, space for responsive (demand-led) programming support to the decentralized offices has been restricted. This has now been recognized as a strategic weakness for the organization. A consequence of this, evident from the case studies, is that COs lack information about WEE work taking place outside of their region and require significantly more policy support and technical guidance from HQ in order to strengthen their efforts to advance WEE. In addressing this, the evaluation identifies promising approaches to knowledge management and capacity development.

Scalable good practices and lessons learned

The evaluation identified a number of areas where there is a potential for organizational learning, scaling up and replication across UN Women work on WEE at global, regional and country levels. Lessons learned relate to UN Women work at the micro-level with women entrepreneurs; the importance of addressing social norms that hinder participation of women in

economic and social sphere; the power of platforms that allow interface between women-led grass-roots organizations and decision makers to enhance understanding about their needs and priorities; and the need for a multidimensional and integrated approach to WEE.

While UN Women's good practices in WEE are featured throughout the report, five scalable good practice areas are highlighted related to: (a) work with extractive industries; (b) supporting women to access markets; (c) alignment of WEE work with emerging labour force trends; (d) private sector partnerships in support of WEE; and (e) coalitions among local women traders to influence policy change.

CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

CONCLUSION 1: In principle, UN Women is well placed in the system to influence WEE at the global, regional and country level. Recent efforts by the entity to redefine its vision may now provide the strategic and conceptual framework needed to maximize this advantage.

UN Women has recognized that a lack of strategic focus in WEE has, until now, hampered it from being fully recognized as a central actor on WEE at the global, regional and national levels. An implicit and evolving TOC has insufficiently shaped the organization's programming and results frameworks, limited strategic coherence across the organization, and reduced ability to expand and deepen partnerships. It has also hindered the production of clear corporate guidance on the entity's approach to WEE. Recent efforts to clarify an overarching TOC for WEE are extremely positive and will likely contribute to greater re-alignment of the entity's operational work with its implicit TOCs and enable it to be more forward-looking.

CONCLUSION 2: UN Women's current comparative advantage in the area of WEE is its policy and normative work. It could potentially be a knowledge hub

and thought-leader for human rights-based and gender-responsive work on macro-economic policy, as well as macro-level and meso-level policies.

UN Women has made a significant contribution to global discourse and normative frameworks on WEE, and the entity's normative function has added value through bringing a rights-based perspective. UN Women's coordination mandate and growing country-level presence can be leveraged to help complete the task of effectively integrating WEE across all relevant post-2015 development goals and indicators and supporting agencies within the UN system (particularly at the country level) in advancing sustainable development goals in areas relevant to WEE. There is considerable scope to leverage UN Women's normative mandate to advocate for inclusive macroeconomic policy, based on a rights-based approach that addresses the structural barriers to WEE. Meso-level policy advocacy (such as to promote women's access to agricultural credit and infrastructure investment in ways that reduce women's care burden) would be an important corollary of this work. Expanding UN Women work in this domain would require new partnerships (including additional funds to enable UN Women to influence and enter partnerships through joint programmes) and significant capacity development (in particular training and guidance tools for regional and country-level staff working on WEE).

CONCLUSION 3: With the right alliances, UN Women could reinvigorate the quest for future economic models, bringing gender-responsive empirical evidence and action research into mainstream economic debates.

While the structural funding gap creates real challenges and has limited UN Women's ability to fully influence, particularly at the country level, there have been some instances where UN Women has been able to achieve important results despite these limitations. At the core of UN Women's future ability to affect change is the set of partnerships and alliances that it can forge. Its impact will depend on working in concert with other partners through joint programming and providing high-quality

technical inputs to engender economic models and EE programmes. Through its coordination mandate, UN Women is already strategically placed to use its partnerships with UNDP, UNCTAD, and UNDESA to address structural bottlenecks to WEE. The entity's operational relationships with academic institutions, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), feminist economists and civil society advisory groups are also promising avenues for bringing increased levels and quality of human rights-based economic analysis and evidence to the table with the Bretton Woods institutions.

Effectiveness

CONCLUSION 4: UN Women's normative mandate has enabled it to effectively influence international discourse, standards and a range of national policies—despite having limited resources.

Based on past lessons learned, UN Women has successfully intensified its involvement at the normative level, enabling it to effectively influence international discourse around issues such as unpaid care work, domestic workers, home-based workers, women migrant workers and rural women. COs have made progress in embedding normative standards into national laws. For the future, scope remains for furthering WEE in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and translating more global normative results into positive changes at the country level while ensuring that knowledge, experiences and best practices from the field are informing global processes.

CONCLUSION 5: Coordination and joint programming have made a cautious but important contribution to advancing WEE within the UN system, especially at the country level. There is both demand and opportunity for UN Women to leverage this into leadership of convening and facilitating the WEE community.

While no specific mechanism exists for coordinating WEE at the global level, there is also a strong case for avoiding additional layers of coordination mechanisms. A more promising approach looks to be a combination of existing fora, a WEE community

of practice, and guidance on using the SWAP (and gender scorecards) to promote accountability in relation to WEE. UN Women's leadership and role in existing coordination fora (such as Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality [IANWGE] at the HQ level and the UN resident coordinator system and UNDAF working groups at the country level) is already producing important results in terms of an increased number of joint programmes and UNDAFs that are effectively gender-responsive. Analysis of UN Women's comparative advantages finds that it has significant expertise in convening and facilitating multi-stakeholder groups. Combined with a strong demand for it to assume a leadership position in relation to broader coordination of WEE efforts, there is a strong case for the entity to take a more inclusive approach to its coordination role by creating platforms for participatory dialogue and collaboration.

CONCLUSION 6: The principle means by which UN Women can enhance its effectiveness is through its partnerships. Becoming more strategic and selective will be critical.

There is very limited scope for planning based on raising large increases in financial resources, especially within the structurally underfunded gender sector and doing so also places UN Women in direct competition with the very organizations that it is seeking to build alliances with. Partnerships offer a more sustainable and more scalable route to extending UN Women capacity. While it is promising to see increased instances of partnerships in support of WEE (particularly through the Knowledge Gateway and the post-2015 process), UN Women also needs to be more strategic and selective in ensuring that the parameters, expectations and contributions of its partnerships are clearly defined. The organization is also learning that different types of partnerships require different modes of thinking, including when they relate to different thematic areas.

CONCLUSION 7: UN Women's operational work makes the most effective contribution where it identifies and addresses structural barriers and bottlenecks to women's realization of their economic and social rights.

A great deal of UN Women's micro-level work is currently designed to solve economic problems faced by women—provide direct access to better skills, credit products, market opportunities, information and other services. A great deal has been learned from this work, including through the FGE. But the limited scope for impact in comparison to operational work at the meso- and macro-levels suggests that the time has come to revise the approach: micro-level work needs to sit within a bigger picture and contribute evidence towards shifting structural bottlenecks to WEE. UN women should be highly selective in its micro-level work and focus strongly on how it will provide evidence and data about structural barriers to women's realization of their economic and social rights.

Gender equality and human rights

CONCLUSION 8: Women's economic, social and cultural rights stand in a disadvantaged position in relation to the dominant political economic paradigm. In this context, UN Women needs to mobilize and give voice to all the allies it can—including men, civil society, and the private sector—from the position of legal authority that human rights frameworks provide.

The evaluation found that UN Women's recent shift towards a rights-based approach for its work on WEE (which approaches WEE in terms of constraints and discrimination) positions the entity well to add value to other existing efforts in this area. Given the challenges that UN Women has faced in articulating and communicating a coherent rights-based notion of WEE, it may be useful for the entity to reframe its work in terms of women's economic and social rights. Evidence from UN Women's operational work suggests that the realization of women's economic and social rights needs to include strengthening rights-holding groups to better organize, document and voice their positions in national processes. The organization has also recognized that increased engagement with men and boys is needed at a country level in order to increase understanding and cultural support for women's economic rights.

Organizational efficiency

CONCLUSION 9: During its transition phase, UN Women undertook intentional efforts to focus outwards to engage with and begin influencing its wider network and environment. To enhance its institutional ability to contribute to WEE, there is now a need to consolidate inwards and strengthen a consistent approach to WEE-related leadership at all levels within the organization.

While UN Women has recently initiated a process to inclusively map out a comprehensive TOC for WEE, this effort has been delayed due to several factors, including internal transition, constrained human resources (including time), and an extremely challenging external context (including resistance to a rights-based approach and competing economic philosophies). As a consequence, UN Women's capacity and experience in WEE is now highly distributed across the organization, but not yet joined up into a cohesive whole. Nevertheless, there is positive movement with recent processes, including the internal and external consultations, and a TOC workshop. There is now a need for the increased priority given to WEE to be matched by resources to build up capacity of UN Women staff in this area at all levels of the organization and to develop corporate guidance through inclusive and open internal processes. The new regional architecture, particularly the new WEE advisers (once they are in place in all regions), provides a valuable in-house resource for the organization to address capacity gaps (particularly in terms of macro-economic and macro-level policy) and support efforts to achieve greater strategic coherence. To make the most of this human resource capacity, the organization requires a culture of navigational leadership at all levels of the organization: providing strong overall direction while enabling autonomy for technical experts.

Lessons learned

CONCLUSION 10: UN Women has generated a wealth of evidence and multiple knowledge management initiatives. The time has come to integrate these efforts

into a systemic approach that enables the organization to realize the promise of its three mandates.

UN Women has created some strong research and knowledge products for the external audience in relation to WEE. The Knowledge Gateway has played an important role in providing a global platform to facilitate experience-based knowledge exchange about WEE between international organizations, CSOs, the private sector and women entrepreneurs seeking to enhance WEE. It has also enabled UN Women to expand and diversify its network of partners. While the Knowledge Gateway has provided an important forum for exchange of experience among external actors, more specific mechanisms and tools need to be developed to support internal organizational learning on WEE through the sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with the gender-responsive and human rights-based principles of the evaluation, this report emphasizes that the decisions about what UN Women should or should not do in the future, and the prerogative for privileging the knowledge that influences such decisions, belong to the organization. The evaluation has identified five recommendations that are critical for UN Women's future contribution to WEE. It is recognized that these are significant decisions, some of which transcend WEE, and therefore require input and involvement across all levels of the organization.

It is important to emphasize that, while it is the considered view of the evaluation that the recommended actions are those that are most supported by the evidence, universal agreement on these recommendations does not yet exist within the organization, and an inclusive process of shared decision-making is required in relation to all five recommendations.

In supporting the organization to reach and implement the five recommendations, the evaluation has

articulated two levels of time-phased actions. Within each set of actions, implications of choosing to make and not make the recommended decisions are identified (including related to resources, capacity and other factors). **Short-term actions** are both immediate and based on helping the organization improve in regard to the path that it is already following. These actions target the global, regional and country level. **Mid-term actions** are transformative ones that the evidence suggests are necessary if the organization undertakes, at a corporate level, to move decisively in the direction that the evidence in this evaluation is most supportive of. UN Women should consider these actions as part of the mid-term review of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDED DECISION 1: The UN Women mission is best served by moving decisively into the macro-economic space.

It is the recommendation of the evaluation that UN Women needs to determine the extent to which it plans to move into and equip itself to engage with debate, dialogue, advising, action and advocacy in the macroeconomic space. The process of making this decision should be an inclusive one, involving all levels of the organization, as all members of staff will need to get behind such a strategic direction to make it effective.

Short-term actions: At global, regional and country levels, UN Women is advised to forge a closer working partnership with UN economic actors in order to address structural barriers to women's economic and social rights through meso- and macro-level policy interventions, including efforts to build on joint work in statistics and human rights and gender-responsive macroeconomic policy research. At the country level this should largely be meso-level work focused on engendering national development plans and poverty reduction strategies, including the statistical and budget monitoring systems that support them. This could continue the focus on the macroeconomic conditions and policies required to promote decent work, and include increased efforts by UN Women to align its work

on WEE with emerging labour market trends and to promote institutional change, such as in the rules on land titling, and women's access to credit. Over time UN Women COs need to receive the necessary policy guidance and support from HQ and the regional offices to enable micro-level work (including through the FGE) to more directly link to meso-level interventions.

Mid-term actions: Following a final decision as part of the mid-term review, UN Women would be advised to address the structural barriers to women's economic and social rights through situating macroeconomic and meso- and macro-level policy influence as the centrepiece of UN Women's future WEE strategy. At the heart of this could be a concerted attempt to engender mainstream economic models and policies. Working with academic and community partners around the world, the Bretton Woods institutions, and the women's movement, UN Women could support medium and large-scale projects that generate decent employment in rural areas, and promote the growth of medium- and large-scale women's enterprises, helping to transform the lending practices of IFIs. In support of HQ's work to influence macroeconomic and macro-level policies, UN Women COs can identify relevant and appropriate areas to engage with governments through meso-level interventions aimed at promoting the conditions required for women to improve their economic condition—whether or not it is through access to productive and financial resources, social insurance, or work conditions.

RECOMMENDED DECISION 2: UN Women should provide clarity on its commitment to taking up the mantle and responsibility of leading through partnership.

The evaluation has proposed that increased efforts are needed to understand and maximize the value position of UN Women partnerships, including through a well-articulated advocacy strategy for WEE that civil society can rally behind. Better leveraging of UN Women's convening role can further expand its influence in the WEE domain and solidly position the entity as a representative, champion, and broker for other organizations that have comparative advantage in WEE.

Short-term actions: UN Women is advised to focus and deepen its UN system-wide coordination and partnerships with organizations that can have a catalytic role in support of its work on WEE. Working together, the Strategic Partnerships Division and the EE Section should lead a participatory internal process to develop a disaggregated framework of different types of partners, and a model decision-making process for which partnerships to focus on with different objectives. Regional offices and COs will need to be supported to apply this tool to their own contexts. A participatory organizational review of UN Women's private sector engagement can inform the development of a holistic strategy that clearly articulates UN Women objectives, priorities and value propositions connected with such partnerships, including how such partnerships will be effectively leveraged to advance WEE. Instead of implementing programmes directly, UN Women should begin to focus on developing platforms and funding windows for donors where partners can come together in order to maximize their joint impact. IANWGE and UNDAF must increasingly be used to convene, coordinate and mobilize UN system-wide efforts in relation to WEE. UN Women at *global, regional and country levels* can contribute expertise and knowledge to support the UN system (particularly economic agencies) to effectively engender their work on EE. At the *country level*, country teams need to be equipped with increased knowledge, resources and specific guidance to provide effective implementation of the system-wide coordination mandate, better positioning UN Women to exert greater influence in attracting and convening partners and actors working in the area of EE.

Mid-term actions: Following a final decision as part of the mid-term review, UN Women would be advised at the *global and country level* to identify major structural blockages within the economic system where competing interests of major constituents are a barrier to making common progress on women's economic and social rights. The entity can develop an intensive process that brings these competing stakeholders into dialogue with each other for a concentrated period of time to build relationships and a mutual plan of action. To address longer-term relationships UN

Women could maximize its convening role at *global, regional and country levels* by bringing together its civil society, private sector, and trade union partners into a single platform for dialogue. Outcomes from these dialogue processes can be used to inform the development of new economic models and tools that can be shared more widely. This would enable UN Women to consider fundraising specifically for its technical services, facilitation and monitoring follow-up of commitments—both achieving WEE objectives and (potentially) generating an additional source of income. Examples of changed behaviour and practices emerging from these dialogues could be subjected to impact evaluation, with the evidence collected being used to advocate for stronger responses to WEE among other member states and private stakeholders.

RECOMMENDED DECISION 3: UN Women work on WEE should explicitly be based on, and guided by, a rights-based approach.

The evaluation proposes the establishment of a common approach that is institutionalized within UN Women and forms the basis of all future knowledge generation. It is therefore recommended that a clear decision is made, and guidance provided, on what UN Women's core values are in relation to interpreting the world relating to WEE.

Short-term actions: At *global, regional and country levels*, UN Women is advised to continue applying a rights-based approach to WEE internally (focused on economic and social rights), and openly in existing fora where it is the norm, such as intergovernmental work. At a *country level*, UN Women staff members require increased knowledge and capacity to systematically apply a HRBA and ensure that operational work is designed to support implementation of normative commitments and recommendations emanating from relevant human rights treaty bodies, human rights experts and special rapporteurs. At the *global and regional level*, there should be greater engagement with a wider range of human rights treaty and intergovernmental bodies beyond CEDAW and CSW in order to advance application of a rights-based approach to WEE. UN Women can continue to scale

up its normative and coordination efforts, with a shift towards a greater focus on a rights-based approach where it can exert more influence as a thought leader, advocate, and knowledge hub in advancing WEE. As part of an approach to becoming a thought-leader, UN Women should retarget its WEE programming in terms of participatory action research—pioneering new approaches to reach forgotten groups while generating evidence in high risk and innovative areas.

Mid-term actions: Following a final decision as part of the mid-term review, UN Women would be advised to reframe its work in terms of women’s economic and social rights and rename the thematic area accordingly. All the economic work of the organization could be framed and articulated in terms of human rights first. In adopting this approach, information and knowledge collected about structural barriers to women’s economic and social rights and participation in the productive workforce should be used to inform the design and implementation of programming at a broader policy level within each country.

RECOMMENDED DECISION 4: UN Women needs to strengthen leadership across the organization in order to support work on WEE.

The evaluation found different leadership styles, approaches and skills being applied to WEE throughout the organization. This inconsistency in leadership culture and skill, combined with a complex and turbulent external situation, makes the boundaries of personal autonomy and accountability unclear for many staff members engaged in WEE. The result is excessive adversity to taking risk, defensive behaviours, and gaps in communication. The evaluation proposes that it is appropriate, therefore, to recommend that a clear position is taken with regard to developing leadership culture and capacity in UN Women.

Short-term actions: UN Women is advised that the values and standards of the entity’s leadership culture need to be communicated heavily within the organization, so that staff members come to reasonably expect that leaders at all levels—from individual projects to the Executive Director—are accountable

to a consistent organizational approach to leadership. Intellectual and executive leadership of WEE should steadily be returned to the EE Section within the Policy Division. This can be manifested in terms of increased focus on responding to the needs of country and regional offices in relation to their EE programming (through a mechanism such as a helpdesk). The organization should provide the EE Section with sufficient time and resources to develop practical and needs-based corporate guidance and knowledge sharing tools based on the active participation of staff members at all levels of the organization. The establishment of a clear vision, strategic focus, and TOC for UN Women work on WEE is needed to enable the EE Section and the Executive Director’s Office to ensure that a common institutional direction is communicated throughout the organization.

Mid-term actions: Following a final decision as part of the mid-term review, UN Women would be advised to move away from seeking “programme models” that can be applied across its portfolio and instead adopt a highly participatory and gender-responsive approach to its work. This should focus instead on enabling self-organizing local networks, both internally and externally. Space needs to be made for multidisciplinary teams to form and collaborate on shared tasks. This process must be directly supported by the Office of the Executive Director, which should work closely with the EE Section to create a more nimble and holistic approach to integrating organizational and technical change for WEE.

Recommended Decision 5: UN Women needs to equip and organize itself in line with becoming a knowledge-led organization.

UN Women has recognized the potential value of knowledge management as a function and has started several initiatives in an attempt to address this. How these different parts will be brought together into a unified system is a critical decision that needs to be made sooner rather than later.

Short-term actions: UN Women is advised to prioritize the knowledge actions that it has already identified,

including rolling out a global roster of experts, the Knowledge Gateway, and the UN Women Training Centre WEE courses to UN Country Teams (UNCTs) around the world. The WEE regional advisers should begin to play a greater role in the knowledge system. Planning and Programme Guidance Unit (PPGU) and the Research and Data Section can support the development of a set of rights-based key performance indicators for UN Women contributions to WEE. These allow CO monitoring and decentralized evaluations to capture the full range of WEE impacts. At the *country level*, COs need to begin designing projects and programmes so as to generate evidence for specific normative and policy work, ensuring that strategies (such as impact evaluations) to capture and communicate these findings are included in the design and budget. These communication products should be “pushed up” to HQ teams (including FGE and the Knowledge Gateway) and “pushed out” to other country teams through the WEE regional advisers.

Mid-term actions: Following a final decision as part of the mid-term review, UN Women would be advised to elevate EmpowerWomen.org is from the Knowledge Gateway into a Global Gateway—increasing the “felt presence” of the Knowledge Gateway activities, FGE

activities and selected UN Women Training Centre courses by making them available through a single website. This could include the addition of opportunity brokerage helping to match donors such as private foundations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that can meet their needs and, at the same time, advance UN Women’s mission. Future rounds of the FGE should also be channeled through this global gateway. As the centerpiece of UN Women’s knowledge strategy, the Knowledge Gateway must work with the UN Women Training Centre to make its free knowledge products available on the site. Future rounds of the FGE can be applied for through this global gateway. In both cases, this will create an incentive for more WEE activists and organizations to regularly visit the site. As a whole, UN Women is advised to embrace a more open approach to data and knowledge, encouraging and incentivizing its staff to participate in gateway discussions. UN Women could use the proposed internal helpdesk/intranet site to embrace and openly acknowledge and discuss failure (as well as success) within the organization in relation to innovative approaches. Staff members need to be encouraged to post examples of things that have not worked, with their explanations for what unforeseen factors caused these problems so that they can be learned from.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

INTRODUCTION

This synthesis report is the final product of the thematic corporate evaluation of UN Women’s contribution to WEE. The evaluation was conducted by an external independent team between May 2014 and December 2014 and managed by the UN Women IEO, with the active involvement of internal and external

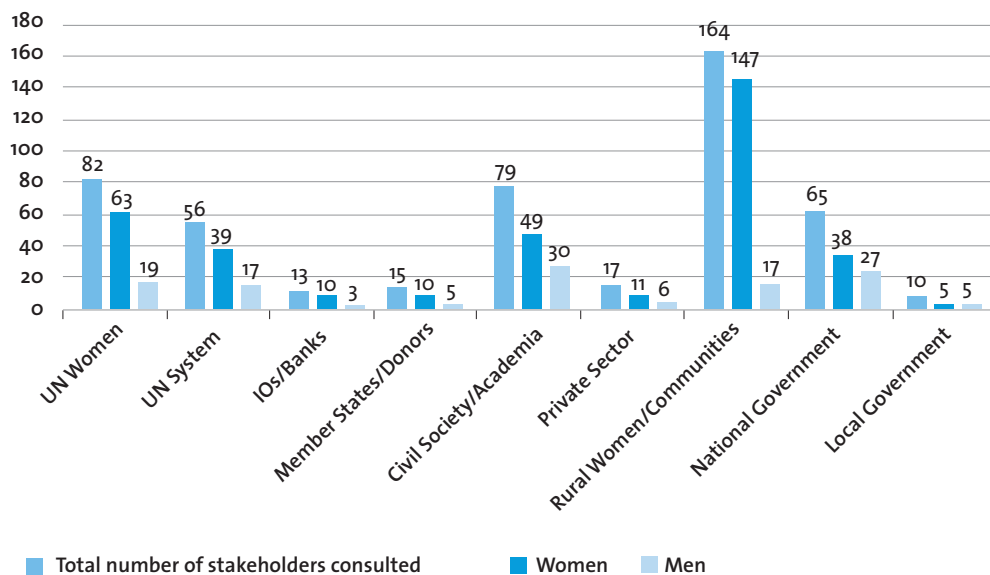
Company in South Africa); (c) the portfolio review of 27 UN Women COs; (d) results from the global and internal evaluation surveys; and (e) a review of more than 300 documents.

This report is the culmination of a highly participatory evaluation process involving direct consultations with 501 stakeholders (372 women and 129 men) as well as 61 stakeholders (39 internal UN Women staff² and 22 external stakeholders) who participated in online surveys (see Figure 1.1). In order to ensure active engagement and inclusion of evaluation stake-

holders and potential users, the evaluation invested significantly in the design of the evaluation process through an extended inception phase to better understand expectations and needs and to ensure that the proposed approach and process were in full alignment with these. The evaluation team endeavoured to set a high standard in its choice of methods and approaches to maximize active stakeholder engagement including innovative methods such as comprehensive

stakeholder mapping; participatory development of an evaluation TOC, CORT during the country case studies, and use of participatory video to capture the

Figure 1.1 Evaluation Stakeholders Directly Consulted



reference groups and an evaluation advisory group.

The aim of this report is to provide overarching and synthesized analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations based on data and information collected and analysed during the evaluation process. This report is informed by: (a) the global case study; (b) six country-level case studies (including the rapid assessment of UN Women’s partnership with The Coca-Cola

² In terms of UN Women staff, 40 staff members from the HQ level and 38 from the regional and country level were directly interviewed. In order to further increase the number of regional and country-level UN Women staff engaged in the evaluation process, an internal survey was sent out to all regional and country offices. The survey was completed by 39 staff across 28 countries.

501

Stakeholders consulted



372 Women

129 Men



27 Country portfolio review
6 Country visits
5 National participatory evaluation workshops

300 +

Documents analyzed



7

Months



EVALUATION TEAM

4 Evaluators
1 Feminist economist
1 Organizational coach
1 Participatory video specialist
4 Researchers
1 Photographer

7 co-evaluators from UN Women country offices and civil society partners



SURVEYS

61 People
28 Countries
22 Orgs



IEO

3 Evaluation management team
2 Evaluation specialists



6 Local women trained in participatory video

experiences of WEE work at the country level. As a result of these methods, a large number of rural women and their communities were able to participate in the evaluation process.

The evaluation team also aimed to set a high standard in terms of applying an HRBA by ensuring that specific measures and approaches were in place to integrate human rights considerations into the evaluation process, conduct and frame the analysis by including integration of human rights and gender equality as a separate criterion, and by mainstreaming gender equality and human rights throughout the evaluation.

This report is comprised of six sections. This first section provides an overview of the evaluation purpose, objectives and limitations and a summary of the evaluation methodology. A general presentation of the wider arena of WEE and UN Women work in this area is included in Section 2. In Section 3, evaluation findings are presented and organized around the key evaluation questions and criteria. A summary of highlighted good practices and lessons learned related to UN Women work in the area of EE are included in Section 4 and conclusions and recommendations in Sections 5 and 6.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

This corporate thematic evaluation aimed to contribute to enhancing UN Women's approach to WEE for the implementation of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. The findings will be used for strategic policy and programmatic decisions, organizational learning and accountability, as well as for the generation of knowledge on what works and what doesn't to advance gender equality. The evaluation is also expected to feed into UN Women's efforts to promote WEE components of a gender equality goal in the post-2015 development framework and inform Beijing +20 discussions.³

As defined by the evaluation Terms of Reference (see Annex A), the objectives of the evaluation were to:

- a) Assess the relevance of UN Women's WEE approach at global, regional and national levels, as well as UN Women's comparative advantage/added value in the WEE thematic area as compared with key partners, for example, UN system and Bretton Woods institutions.
- b) Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of results, as defined in the 2011-2013 and 2014-2017 strategic plans, including the organizational mechanisms to ensure efficient linkages/feedback loop between HQ and the field.
- c) Analyse how human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in WEE areas of work.
- d) Identify and validate lessons learned, good practice examples and innovations of work supported by UN Women.
- e) Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UN Women's WEE strategies and approaches.⁴

EVALUATION SCOPE

The scope of the evaluation covered all dimensions of UN Women's work, namely its mandates to support normative and intergovernmental, operational and coordination work at global, regional and country levels between 2011 and the first quarter of 2014.

The evaluation was predominantly formative and forward-looking and focused on learning from UN Women experiences in order to better inform planning and programming on WEE in the coming years, as well as the strategic processes that are currently underway within UN Women in relation to WEE. The evaluation also adopted a complementary summative approach in order to ensure that UN Women progress to date and accomplishments on WEE (including outcomes and early evidence of impacts where

³ UN Women IEO, Terms of reference: Corporate evaluation of UN Women's contribution to women's economic empowerment.

⁴ Ibid.

possible) were well-documented and understood and to enable lessons learned to be distilled.

The evaluation focused on four main evaluation criteria: relevance; effectiveness; organizational efficiency; and integration of a HRBA and gender equality principles in programme planning, implementation and monitoring.⁵ The findings and conclusions included in this report have been organized based on these criteria, along with the guiding questions for the evaluation.

1.2 EVALUATION METHODS

EVALUATION APPROACH

A systemic and gender-responsive approach informed the design of the evaluation, corresponding to the purpose and objective of the evaluation and informed by input provided by key evaluation stakeholders during the inception phase. The overall evaluation design is four-pronged comprising utilization-focused, theory-based, systemic, and gender equality and human rights responsive approaches. In terms of the first approach, the evaluation process has been informed by input from an extended inception phase, which was used to seek the views of key internal

⁵ As per the TOR, and as explained in further detail in the inception report, the evaluation does not fully cover the OECD-DAC criteria of sustainability and impact. In terms of sustainability, this is because the evaluation is mainly formative and much of UN Women WEE programming is still at an early stage (rendering it premature to assess the sustainability of the results achieved). The evaluation does however assess the presence of factors likely to support or hinder the achievement and maintenance of sustainable results, under the effectiveness criteria. It also assesses the presence of such supporting or hindering factors in relation to UN Women organizational efficiency (e.g., long-term nature of planning and implementation mechanisms). Related to impact, under the criteria of effectiveness, the evaluation addresses the issue of what changes, both intended and unintended, UN Women WEE interventions have contributed to thus far with a focus on short and medium term changes (outputs and outcomes). The evaluation does not include a systematic assessment of the long-term impact of the interventions on their beneficiaries and their contexts as this type of analysis would be premature given the time frame of UN Women WEE programming (2011-2014 ongoing).

evaluation stakeholders about the needs and expectations related to the evaluation.⁶

During the inception process, a participatory approach was used to map out a TOC for the evaluation. This TOC, which is included in Annex B, is summative in nature (covering the period 2011-2014), providing a backward-looking summary of the overarching intervention logic of UN Women in WEE and attempting to capture the common logical denominators that have shaped UN Women work during the period under evaluation. The TOC was also used as part of the contribution analysis to provide a critique of the summative TOC based on both empirical (evaluation) data and feminist economic theory.

The evaluation used an approach based on critical systems heuristics to identify stakeholders and stake holding roles included within the boundaries of the evaluation. The approach and culture of the evaluation team was also grounded in systemic thinking, including reflexivity (internal after-action reviews following each stage of the process, plus continuous consultation with stakeholders); respect for self-organization (openness to exploring discontinuities and challenges rather than trying to control the evaluation object); and circularity (in terms of multiple rounds of participation and validation/learning).

Throughout all phases of the evaluation, human rights and gender-responsive approaches were applied in the design and conduct of the evaluation (see the section on “Ethics, gender equality and human rights” below).

EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process consisted of four phases:

a) Inception (May 2014 – June 2014): Consultations between the evaluation team and the IEO, programme portfolio review, stakeholder mapping, inception meetings with the reference groups, review of the result logic for this thematic area,

⁶ During the inception phase, 33 UN Women evaluation stakeholders (25 female and 8 male) were consulted and more than 370 documents reviewed.

finalization of selection criteria for country case studies for level 2 and level 3 country case studies, finalization of evaluation methodology and inception report

b) Social enquiry (July 2014 – September 2014): Desk research, in-depth review of global, country and regional level planning frameworks and programme documents, in-depth review of WEE portfolio of 27 COs and telephone/Skype interviews, staff and partner surveys, visits to five case-study countries and HQ and preparation of 6 case-study reports.

c) Analysis and synthesis (September 2014 – December 2014): Analysis of data and interpretation of findings, and drafting of an evaluation report and other communication products.

d) Dissemination and follow-up (January 2015 – February 2015): Development of a management response, publication of the evaluation report, preparation of the executive summary report for the Executive Board, uploading of the published report on the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE) website⁷, and production of other knowledge products and learning events, such as a webinar.

ETHICS, GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UN Women Evaluation Policy⁸ and UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System.⁹ All members of the team signed and submitted an Evaluation Consultants Agreement

7 UN Women's Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use (GATE) website, <http://gate.UN Women.org>.

8 UN Women, 'Evaluation policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women', (UNW/2012/12), 2012.

9 UNEG, 'UNEG ethical guidelines', accessible at: http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=102 and 'UNEG code of conduct for evaluation in the UN system', accessible at: http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=100.

Form indicating their individual commitment to these standards. The evaluation was also based on gender equality and human rights principles (see above), as defined in the UN Women Evaluation Policy and adhered to the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.¹⁰

Throughout all phases of the evaluation, human rights and gender-responsive approaches were applied not only in the design and conduct of the evaluation but also included as a specific stand-alone criteria effort¹¹ whereby analysis of the application of an HRBA and gender equality principles in WEE interventions and programming were an integral part of the evaluation process. This included analysis of the extent to which UN Women WEE approaches, interventions and programming have been based on international human rights standards and the extent to which UN Women WEE work is operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights, including the degree to which UN Women WEE approaches, programme design and implementation seek to analyse inequalities and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress.

Mainstreaming gender equality/ human rights issues in the evaluation design and scope

The evaluation examined how rights holders and duty bearers are affected by interventions including how rights holders are able to access and exercise their

10 UNEG, 'Norms and standards for evaluation in the UN system', accessible at: http://www.uneval.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_source_id=4; 'Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation: Towards UNEG guidance', accessible at: http://www.uneval.org/papersandpubs/documentdetail.jsp?doc_id=1401.

11 In the Evaluation Terms of Reference, a specific evaluation objective on human rights and gender equality was included as well as considered under each evaluation criterion. In order to more fully analyse how human rights approach and gender equality principles were integrated in UN Women WEE work, the evaluation team proposed to include a specific criterion on human rights and gender equality in addition to mainstreaming analysis related to this area throughout the report.

rights and how duty bearers' capacity to fulfil their human rights obligations is strengthened.

In order to ensure that gender equality/human rights issues were included as part of the scope and object of the evaluation, integration of gender equality/human rights was included as a specific criterion and within the evaluation matrix, specific human rights-based and gender sensitive indicators were included where relevant. Among the scope of the evaluation, the evaluation team examined:

- The broader human rights framework within the United Nations and how this has informed the design and implementation of UN Women WEE-related interventions.
- Participation of rights holders and duty bearers in the design, implementation and monitoring of programme interventions.
- The extent to which an HRBA and gender equality approach is incorporated into the design, monitoring and reporting of WEE interventions.
- The extent to which UN Women intervention theory has considered human rights and gender equality issues (including root causes of inequality and discrimination and intersections between rights of affected groups).
- How recommendations of relevant human rights treaty/intergovernmental bodies (i.e. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, CEDAW, CSW, Universal Periodic Review, HRC) are incorporated into the design and implementation of UN Women strategic, programmatic and project frameworks related to WEE.
- UN Women understanding of existing WEE capacities and needs of rights holders and duty bearers (at global, regional and country levels).
- Evidence of constraints faced by UN Women in applying a gender equality/human rights approach.

Integration of human rights and gender equality in the evaluation methods and conduct

Throughout the evaluation process, the evaluation team employed an approach that integrated gender equality and human rights in the evaluation methods and conduct. During the inception phase, the evaluation team conducted an inclusive stakeholder analysis, which included a strong focus on human rights and gender equality. The stakeholder analysis entailed a rigorous mapping and gender equality/human rights based analysis of evaluation stakeholders including rights holders, duty bearers, and marginalized groups, and identified potential power dynamics between these groups. This involved a disaggregation of target groups of women and men likely to be affected by human rights violations and discrimination, including exclusion from social action. Using information from the human rights and gender equality analysis of stakeholders, the evaluation team developed evaluation methods and data collection processes responsive to gender equality/human rights issues including measures to mitigate potential barriers and sources of exclusion, such as unequal power relations and discriminatory practices, norms and values inherent within communities and the wider society. For instance, during focus group discussions, the evaluation team used a data-collection approach and a process of gaining free, prior and informed consent that was not reliant on participants' level of literacy and transferred the power of co-operation back to them. The evaluation also applied validation processes with both internal (UN Women) and external stakeholders designed to give all participants an equal voice, such as through the participatory video screening.

Throughout the evaluation, disaggregated data was sought and used by the evaluation team wherever possible and lists of evaluation stakeholder participants were disaggregated throughout the case study. In order to ensure that gender equality/human rights issues were also integrated within the scope and focus of the case, study, the evaluation team included specific questions related to gender equality and human rights within the interview protocols.

Data collection tools developed by the evaluation team also integrated gender equality and human rights, in particular the interview protocols and surveys developed, and a mixed-methods approach was applied, involving a blend of qualitative and quantitative data and analysis methods to achieve a balance in qualitative and quantitative approaches and to support validation of data and findings through triangulation (see section on “Data collection and analysis methods” below).

Throughout all phases of the evaluation, the evaluation team was guided by a participatory approach in order to ensure the inclusion of evaluation stakeholders in the evaluation design and implementation. During the inception phase, evaluation stakeholders (particularly end users of the evaluation) participated in interviews and focus group discussions with the evaluation team to share their expectations and needs related to the evaluation products and process.

Internal and external online surveys were also administered during the evaluation to further expand the reach of consultation and support validation and triangulation of initial findings from the HQ and country case studies. The internal survey was completed by 39 UN Women stakeholders in 28 countries and the external survey by 22 persons including UN partners, international organizations, NGOs, donors, foundations and the private sector.

During the data collection phase, the evaluation supported the empowerment of rights holders through the use of participatory methods. At the country level, evaluation stakeholders were actively involved in contributing to the findings and recommendations of the case study through a participatory and innovative CORT process that followed participatory principles and emphasized the voice of women and other community members in assessing change. The use of a participatory video approach during one of the country case studies also supported the integration of gender equality/human rights by ensuring that the views of the most excluded groups of women were represented and actively involved in the evaluation and learning activities.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS

The evaluation had three levels of analysis and validation of information:

LEVEL 1 included a desk review of information sources on WEE available through corporate UN Women reporting and information systems such as UN Women annual reports, existing portfolio analyses of WEE programming developed by UN Women, and relevant evaluations.

LEVEL 2 involved more in-depth WEE portfolio analysis of a representative sample of 27 UN Women offices or “country cases”. *Level 2* analysis was primarily based on a document review and supplemented with additional telephone/Skype interviews with the key stakeholders of WEE programmes.

LEVEL 3 involved a HQ level case study on global programmes, coordination and normative work as well as field visits to six countries¹² that served to illuminate how the work of UN Women has been planned and implemented, and to assess UN Women contribution towards results as well as to identify lessons and good practices for future replication and scaling-up.

Throughout the case studies, a range of evaluation methods were employed—document review, interviews, roundtable discussions, focus groups, observation and participatory video methods in a selected country. Qualitative comparative case-study analysis was applied to systematically analyse data from *level 2* and *level 3* case studies to identify necessary characteristics and factors necessary for progress towards results.

In the analysis, a mixed-methods approach was applied (see Figure 1.2 below), involving a blend of qualitative and quantitative data and analysis methods both for balance and to support validation of data and findings through triangulation.

¹² South Africa was included in order to conduct a rapid assessment of UN Women’s partnership with The Coca-Cola Company.

Figure 1.2:
Overview of evaluation
mixed methods

		ANALYSIS	
		Quantitative (QUANT)	Qualitative (QUAL)
DATA	QUANT	Network analysis fsQCA	Contribution analysis Multiple lines and levels of evidence synthesis
	QUAL	fsQCA WEE scale ToC frequency mapping	CORT case studies Case study qualitative comparative analysis Organizational capacities Contribution analysis Critical systems Multiple lines and levels of evidence synthesis

A special qualitative assessment tool for the portfolio analysis was developed by the evaluation team and used to quantify qualitative data based on 100 indicators. These indicators were informed by the findings of the 5 participatory case studies and grouped into 12 “variables” that were hypothesized as the most likely explanations for UN Women’s level of effectiveness in a country context.

Data for these 100 indicators was collected from all 27 portfolio countries and processed using a technique called fuzzy sets qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). Similar to statistical methods, fsQCA identifies which variables, and combinations of variables, are most frequently associated with UN Women being effective in a country. The technique is specifically designed for situations that are not “black and white” and allowed the evaluation to accommodate the “greyiness” inherent in ideas of more and less effective empowerment.

The results of the fsQCA were combined with other analyses (including organizational capacity assessment, social network mapping, and task/role analysis) in a technique called contribution analysis. Contribution analysis systematically considers all the alternative explanations for the changes that have been observed and attempts to exclude these

to build a case for the contribution that UN Women has made. The design of the fuzzy sets indicators was also used in combination with multiple lines and levels of evidence, which provided the evaluation with the opportunity to mitigate gaps in the final data set and triangulate the data.

Contribution analysis was used to develop an overall “performance story” for UN Women work on WEE. The evaluation synthesized evidence from secondary sources, portfolio analysis and the case studies, using Mill’s Method of Agreement¹³ to assess plausible contribution to observed changes, including exploring alternative explanations identified through theory, interviews and literature.

¹³ Many traditional evaluations use John Stuart Mill’s Method of Difference to isolate the effects of an intervention. This is not possible when there is a high degree of complexity and/or no baseline. In such cases, Mill explained that we can use logic to derive cause-and-effect from multiple cases: “If two or more instances of the phenomenon under investigation have only one circumstance in common, the circumstance in which alone all the instances agree, is the cause (or effect) of the given phenomenon” (John Stuart Mill, 1843. *A System of Logic*, Vol. 1. p454). This is known as Mill’s Method of Agreement. See also: Elliot Stern, Nicoletta Stame, John Mayne, Kim Forss, Rick Davies, and Barbara Befani, 2012. *Broadening the Range of Designs and Methods for Impact Evaluations*. DFID Working Paper 38. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67427/design-method-impact-eval.pdf.

Throughout the evaluation process, all of the emerging findings were triangulated (compared and contrasted) using: (a) secondary data such as academic literature, prior evaluations and programme monitoring data; and (b) participatory feedback from UN Women stakeholders.

CASE-STUDY SAMPLING AND SECTION CRITERIA

Sampling was applied to two aspects of the evaluation: (a) selection of the countries to be included in the portfolio analysis (level 2), and (b) selection of countries to be visited as CORT case studies (level 3). The overall aim for the sampling was: (a) to maximize opportunities for learning, and (b) to be representative of UN Women's WEE "universe" in order to draw robust conclusions. The sample of countries for the portfolio analysis and the country case studies was made using 15 criteria organized into three tiers of priority. The sampling criteria are presented in Annex D.

EVALUATION ASSUMPTIONS, CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

The inception phase identified a number of assumptions as well as limitations and approaches and strategies to mitigate the latter.

Assumptions and constraints

The scale and complexity of the evaluation resulted in a number of practical constraints around timing. In order to address this, the co-team leaders prepared a detailed work schedule, with the estimated number of team members' days allocated to each task and provided individual terms of reference to each member of the team.

Nevertheless, the organization of the HQ and country case studies was a challenging endeavour, given the tight time frame for completion and the use of participatory methodologies and desire for an inclusive approach. The evaluation team worked closely and flexibly with IEO in order to manage this process.

The CORT case-study approach required a high level of engagement by COs and local stakeholders. To facilitate this, the evaluation team worked in close cooperation with IEO in order to clearly articulate expectations for the case study to candidate countries and mitigate the risk of evaluation fatigue by avoiding the need to return to countries that were visited in previous evaluations. To ensure consistency of approach and overall quality assurance, each visit was led and coordinated by an evaluation co-team leader.

The availability, consistency and quality of WEE results and finance data were also highly limited (particularly related to the entity's operational work on WEE) and the boundaries of what constitutes WEE interventions were also blurred. The inception phase undertook a rapid assessment of the material for individual countries and the sample was based partly on this appraisal of evaluability. The evaluation scope was designed to clearly delineate the evidence to be considered in the evaluation.

The evaluation has operated within the real world constraints of the available budget and time availability of participants and evaluators. It was also under the time constraint of the need to finalize the evaluation report according to the evaluation work plan agreed with the evaluation team. The co-team leaders worked collaboratively and transparently with the evaluation manager to manage the evaluation process within these constraints, while ensuring that expectations were realistic and met.

Limitations

The theory-based and utilization-focused design proposed for the evaluation had many comparative advantages within the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation. It also faced inherent limitations, some of which could not be, or could only partially be, overcome. The main limitations of the evaluation design included:

- a) No assessment of attribution to impacts.** The complexity of the evaluation, combined with the absence of a counterfactual or a comparator, meant that the evaluation could assess UN

Women contribution to WEE, but not assess attribution. However, the application of a theory-based model allowed complexity and context to be more fully explored and understood, and causative pathways to be mapped.

b) The reductionist nature of fuzzy sets (fsQCA).

While fuzzy sets allowed quantitative analysis to be applied to qualitative data without creating arbitrary cut-offs, it still relied on a discrete number of sets and the indicators of membership of each set to be identified. This process of identifications rested on interpretative assumption, theory and the quality of preexisting evidence. Furthermore, the quality of data, and the selection of benchmarks used in the fsQCA also affected the reliability and validity of the end result. The evaluation mitigated this risk by validating the WEE scale using the outputs from a comprehensive qualitative comparative analysis process on country case studies, applied transparent processes to populate the WEE scale indicators (including triangulating data where possible), and compared the outputs of the fsQCA with the wider literature review on TOCs.

c) Reliance on “shallow” cases to achieve representativeness.

The representative analysis for the evaluation was derived from the portfolio analysis. The country cases included in the analysis were necessarily shallow, with data derived mostly from document review but with very little contextual depth. This limitation was mitigated by comparison of the portfolio analysis with the wider literature and the process tracing undertaken in the country case studies. The evaluation also subjected all conclusions to a process of participatory validation.

d) Lack of cost-benefit analysis or a future-looking TOC.

Two key expectations from stakeholders that could not be met by the proposed design were a cost-benefit analysis of UN Women impact on WEE and a revised TOC for the organization to use in the future. The cost-benefit analysis was limited by the constraints on available quantitative data (noted above) and the absence of an assessment

of impact. The development of a future-looking TOC required substantial design and participation activities to be put in place and is more appropriately an output from a negotiated process between stakeholders. The evaluation has, where relevant, suggested options for addressing both these needs.

e) Gender equality standards.

The system-wide approach to gender equality requires that evaluations meet a number of standards that were not fully achievable in this evaluation due to design and real world constraints. For instance, despite proposing a number of possibilities for doing so, the inception phase was unable to realize a mechanism for fully involving UN Women clients in the design and finalization of the evaluation framework and methods (although these were subject to extensive consultation within the organization). In addition, limited disaggregated data was available on the stakeholders in the evaluation, largely due to the very large and complex scope. The evaluation mitigated these limitations by including sex-disaggregated data on all evaluation participants, including sex-disaggregated data in the portfolio analysis wherever possible, and using cutting-edge participatory methods in the country case studies.

COMMUNICATIONS AND USE OF THE EVALUATION

The intended use of the evaluation is to inform strategic policy and programmatic decision-making and management, organizational learning and accountability within UN Women, and contribute to wider knowledge on what works and what doesn't to advance gender equality. The primary intended users of the evaluation findings and recommendations are UN Women's Executive Board, senior management, staff at HQ, regional and country levels working on WEE and other global stakeholders working in the area of WEE.

The evaluation will be presented to the Annual Session of the Executive Board in 2015 and will be made publicly available on the UN Women GATE

system.¹⁴ In order to support institutional learning based on the evaluation report, the evaluation team, in coordination with the IEO, will contribute towards the development of knowledge products and learning events including a webinar on the evaluation findings and response.

Throughout the evaluation, the team has distributed 500 pens and business cards printed with details of how to follow the outcomes of the evaluation; 25 evaluation participants signed up to a dedicated e-mail list that will be used to broadcast an alert when the final report is published on GATE.

¹⁴ The report will be accessible on the GATE system website at: <http://gate.UN Womenomen.org>.

2. EVALUATION CONTEXT

2.1 GLOBAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The international community has identified WEE as a stand-alone objective that is critical not only for gender equality but also for overall development and poverty reduction. Improving the economic status of women can lead to better outcomes at the individual, family and community levels, and has ripple effects across society. WEE affects not only the economic health of countries through increased productivity, but

Definition of Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)

Within UN Women, a definition of WEE has been included within an internal WEE Guidance Note (developed in 2012). WEE is broadly defined as *the ability of women to bring about positive changes in their lives and societies as a result of their participation in economic activities and decision-making. This requires: (a) women's ability to participate in labour and product markets on equal footing with men and in work that is decent, that is, that provides a stable and adequate income with benefits; (b) a redistribution of care work within the household and communities; (c) women's ability to own and control productive assets; (d) women's access to social protection and insurance; and (e) women's agency, that is, their ability to act as decision makers, influencing outcomes at the household level as well as governance and institutional structures at the local and national level.* It is important to note that UN Women's WEE definition is evolving and internal processes are currently underway to support UN Women to iterate a new and more nuanced definition of WEE (see Finding 2).

also overall health and well-being outcomes for the next generation, and better outcomes for institutions and policy choices.

A variety of understandings of the scope of WEE emerge from UN Women documents. In part, this is because WEE is an evolving and complex concept, and also because it is influenced by a number of factors, including capabilities (such as health and education), as well as the external environment—the degree of society-wide inequality and the functioning of the macro-economy. Further, a focus on the power differences between women and men and structural barriers and the persistence of gender stereotypes are considered to be part of WEE.

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 provided important momentum in efforts to advance WEE through the Beijing Platform for Action. Commitments to promote women's economic rights and independence were made and these included “access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources” and efforts to “facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade.”¹⁵

In recent years, a variety of institutions and women's groups have underscored the intrinsic value of women's well-being and gender equality. Development experts and practitioners, for example, have emphasized the goal of inclusive growth and identified the importance of gender equality as an intrinsic goal. It is also seen as part and parcel of the goal of economic development, which is broadly shared well-being. It thus reflects a focus on inequality, and as a result, national economic policies that affect growth and distribution. A marriage of the instrumentalist and intrinsic justifications for a focus on gender inequality has since emerged. This approach emphasizes that gender equality is not only important in its own right but it is also within the reach of poorer countries

¹⁵ Beijing Platform for Action, 1995, Strategic Objectives F1 and F2.

that may be perceived as lacking the fiscal space to adopt measures to improve women's well-being. The reasoning is as follows: Because standards of living rise with greater gender equality, gender equality is self-financing in that government revenues that derive from higher incomes can be used to fund the costs of fostering gender equality.

Recently, a new right-based framework arguing for gender equality emerged, based on human rights normative standards.¹⁶ A recent concept note prepared by UN Women EE Section¹⁷ has adopted this framework in its analysis, grounded in both CEDAW and the Beijing Platform. CEDAW promotes human rights and fundamental freedom of women, and gender equality between women and men through women's equal access to—and equal opportunities in—political and public life, education, health and employment. The concept note elaborates the relationship between rights and WEE, both absolute and relative to men.

INTERNATIONAL NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR WEE

The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action includes 12 critical areas of concern that all have direct relevance to WEE (in particular, education, decision-making, poverty and human rights). Under Critical Area F (related to Women and the Economy), the Platform for Action under Strategic Objectives F1 and F2 also include specific commitments to: (a) promote women's economic independence, including employment, and eradicate the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes of poverty through changes in economic structures, ensuring equal access for all women (Paragraph 26); (b) ensure women's equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, science

and technology, vocational training, information, communication and markets; and (c) develop gender-sensitive multi-sectoral programmes and strategies to end social subordination of women and girls and to ensure their social and EE and equality.¹⁸

Other key international standards aimed at advancing WEE include:

- a) CEDAW has provisions on country duties to: eliminate discriminatory laws, policies and practices in the national legal framework (Article 2); uphold women's equality in all spheres of life, including in social and economic fields (Article 3); implement temporary special measures to accelerate women's equality (Article 4.1); modify or eliminate of practices based on assumptions about the inferiority or superiority of either sex (Article 5). CEDAW also includes provisions on women's equal rights in employment (Article 11); women's equal rights to family benefits and financial credit (Article 13); and rural women's rights to adequate living conditions, participation in development planning and access to healthcare and education (Article 14).
- b) The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which upholds the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights.
- c) The 2011 International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention (No. 189) concerning decent work for domestic workers offers a historic set of international standards aimed at improving the working conditions of tens of millions of domestic workers worldwide, the vast majority of whom are women and girls.
- d) The 2012 ILO Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection confirms that social security is a right and a necessity for development and an important tool in promoting gender equality.

¹⁶ See, for example, Balakrishnan R, "The integration of gender and human rights into the post-2015 development framework," Center for Women's Global Leadership, 2011.

¹⁷ 'UN Women Economic Empowerment Section concept note: Women's economic empowerment: A framework for consultation', 18 June 2014.

¹⁸ Beijing Platform for Action, 1995, Strategic Objectives F1 and F2, Paragraph 108[e].

- e) The four key ILO gender equality conventions including the Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (No. 156) and Maternity Protection Convention (No. 183).
- f) The CSW Resolution 54/4 on WEE, which noted that WEE is a key factor that contributes to sustainable economic development.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF UN WOMEN WEE WORK

UN Women’s specific mandate on WEE is derived from: (a) commitments in CEDAW; (b) implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action; (c) General Assembly resolutions including Resolution 66/216 on women in development (66/216); and (d) the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (66/129) and violence against women migrant workers (66/128).

Table 2.2a: WEE expenditures 2011-2013

	2011	2012	2013
Total expenditures on WEE <i>(In real 2011 dollars, inflation calculated using Federal Reserve data)</i>	USD 31.5 million <i>(USD 31.5 million)</i>	USD 37 million <i>(USD 36.3 million)</i>	USD 38 million <i>(USD 36.7 million)</i>
Share of total expenditures <i>Rank compared to other thematic areas</i>	14.0% 2	15.7% 3	14.4% 3

Note: USD indicates U.S. dollars

WEE is one of UN Women’s core thematic priorities, as reflected in the Strategic Plan DRF under Goal 2: “to increase women’s access to EE and opportunities.”¹⁹ In the period 2011-2013, UN Women spent 106.5 million U.S. dollars under Strategic Plan Goal 2.

19 UN Women, Strategic Plan 2011-2013—Development Results Framework—Annex I.

In 2013, WEE was the third largest area of investment for UN Women, representing more than 14 per cent of total expenditures.²⁰ Resources for WEE have increased in inflation-adjusted terms since the creation of UN Women though WEE’s share of allocated resources tended to fluctuate with a high of about 16 per cent in 2012 (see Table 2.2a)

According to the UN Women strategic plan, its work on WEE falls broadly into five areas:

- a) *Supporting legislation, policies and strategies* to strengthen WEE and access to resources
- b) *Supporting gender-responsive infrastructure and services* (transport, utilities, water, energy, etc.) to enhance women’s sustainable livelihoods
- c) *Working with gender equality advocates* to influence economic and labour policies and strategies
- d) *Supporting intergovernmental mechanisms* to ensure global policy and normative frameworks for WEE are reaffirmed and deepened
- e) *Working with the UN system and key international partners* (including multi-lateral development banks) to strengthen coordination

UN Women also administers the **FGE**²¹, the only global fund exclusively dedicated to women’s economic and political empowerment.

20 The largest programme expenditure was in the thematic area of ending violence against women (43 million U.S. dollars), followed by leadership and political participation (38 million U.S. dollars) and WEE (37 million U.S. dollars). Source: Data Companion to the Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Plan 2011-2013, p. 34.

21 See <http://www.UNWomen.org/en/trust-funds/fund-for-gender-equality>.

Table 2.2b: Results framework for Goal 2 of strategic plans 2011-2013 and 2014-2017

2011-2013 Development Results Goal 2: Increased EE of women, especially of those who are most excluded	2.1 Legislation, policies and strategies to strengthen WEE and access to resources are adopted and implemented, especially for the informal sector
	2.2 Gender-responsive infrastructure and services (transport, utilities, water, energy, etc.) enhance women’s sustainable livelihoods
	2.3 Gender equality advocates influence economic and labour policies and strategies to promote WEE
	2.4 Global policy and normative frameworks for WEE reaffirmed and deepened
	2.5 Strengthened coordination of the UN system and key international partners (including multi-lateral development banks) on WEE
2014-2017 Impact 2: Women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development	2.1 National plans, legislation, policies, strategies, budgets and justice mechanisms adopted and implemented to strengthen WEE
	2.2 Women’s sustainable livelihoods enhanced by gender- responsive services and access and control over means of production and resources
	2.3 Gender equality advocates influence economic policies and poverty eradication strategies to promote WEE and sustainable development

Under its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, changes were made to the WEE goal/impact area in order to align the entity’s work with emerging priorities. Changes included redefinition of Goal 2²² and: (a) a more explicit focus on the poorest and most excluded women and stronger linkages to poverty reduction strategies; (b) a shift in focus from wealth creation/income generation to access to and control over productive assets; (c) more explicit focus on addressing structural inequalities (including women’s unpaid work burdens, gender inequalities in access to decent employment and equal pay, and access and control over productive resources) and on women’s leadership in economic policy; (d) newly introduced attention to women’s resilience in disasters and climate change (see Table 2.2b for an overview of the results framework and changes made between the strategic plan periods).

22 The Strategic Plan 2014-2017 updated the goal/impact area for WEE to include: “women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development.”

Through a participatory process with the UN Women WEE Section and other key evaluation stakeholders²³, the evaluation reconstructed the ex-post global TOC that has formed the basis of UN Women work on WEE since 2011.²⁴ This formed the basis of the theory-based elements of the evaluation (see Figure 2.2a). This TOC is summative in nature, as it provides a backward-looking summary of the overarching intervention logic of UN Women in WEE and attempts to capture the common logical denominators that have shaped UN Women work during the period under evaluation. It is not meant to capture all the complexity of UN Women understanding and thinking around WEE, but

23 The process used to develop this summative TOC included a participatory TOC discussion with UN Women’s EE Section (Policy Division), consultations with other key stakeholders, and preliminary document review.

24 The objectives and expected uses of the reconstructed summative TOC within the evaluation are the following: (a) to provide a basis to assess and critique UN Women’s approach to WEE to date in terms of relevance and appropriateness of design; (b) to help “bring-together” and summarize results of UN Women work on WEE; and (c) to help understand the inherent assumptions made by UN Women in its WEE programming to date (so that they could be tested through case studies).

the logical building blocks that, at this stage, appear to have mostly guided UN Women work on WEE so far. The reconstructed summative TOC made the largest use possible of the outcomes and outputs identified in UN Women Strategic Plan 2011-2013 and 2014-2017.

NORMATIVE WORK

According to its founding documents, UN Women has a universal normative mandate to support the development and strengthening of norms and standards regarding the status of women in various spheres internationally, regionally and nationally, alongside their implementation through operational and coordination activities, while also informing the development of those norms and standards through experience on the ground.

Normative work on WEE has included support to intergovernmental bodies, such as CSW, ECOSOC and the General Assembly, and regional intergovernmental organizations in their formulation of global standards, norms, and policies on such issues as rural women, unpaid care work, migrant women. It also encompassed support to sectoral and thematic intergovernmental processes, such as those related to migration, social protection, employment, trade, water, climate change. Engagement with major UN and other global agenda-setting processes, such as Rio +20, the post-2015 Discussions on the SDGs and the Beijing +20 review process has also been a key component of UN Women WEE-related normative work. UN Women has engaged with these different mechanisms in several ways including: evidence-based advocacy, technical support, outreach and policy dialogue, and support to gender equality advocates.

At the country level, UN Women's normative work has focused on assisting member states in the implementation of international standards and norms, including providing support to their reporting to treaty bodies and supporting the development of laws and policies to advance WEE.

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The founding resolution of UN Women calls upon the entity to lead, coordinate and promote the accountability of the UN system in its work on gender equality and the empowerment of women, working through mechanisms including the UN system Chief Executives Board for Coordination, its High-level Committee on Programmes and High-level Committee on Management, UNDG and IANWGE.

Coordination work entails efforts to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress (e.g., through the QCPR). UN Women coordination work also includes a broader role in mobilizing and convening key stakeholders and partnerships at global, regional and country levels, by playing a leadership role on gender equality in relevant mechanisms.

Most UN Women coordination efforts at the global level have had a broad cross-cutting gender equality focus, such as its role in the coordination mechanisms listed above, its leadership provided through the UN SWAP, and its role in the implementation of the recommendations of the QCPR of operational activities for development (GA Resolution 67/226) through the UNDG. This included contributing to an action plan on the implementation of resolution 67/226 and participating in the inter-agency team that developed a monitoring framework.

At the country level, UN Women coordination work has primarily taken place within the UNCTs and has involved support for implementation of the UNDAF through participation in working groups and joint programming.

UN Women has pursued several partnerships with other UN agencies to further UN system-wide coordination on both normative and operational matters. Partnerships in the WEE thematic areas have been developed with ILO; Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); World Food Programme (WFP); UN Global Compact; OHCHR;

Figure 2.2a: Reconstructed Theory of Change for WEE in UN Women, 2011-2014

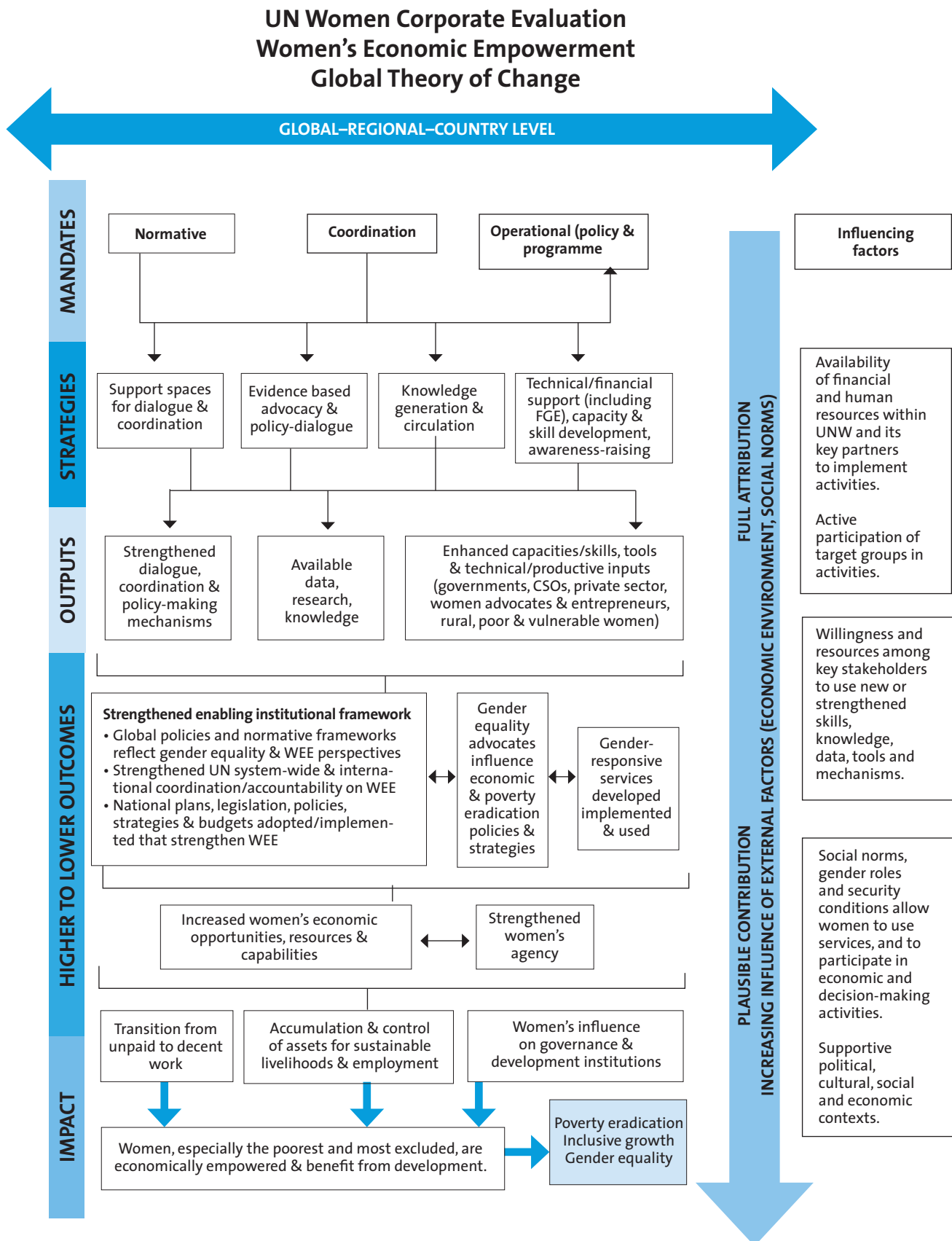
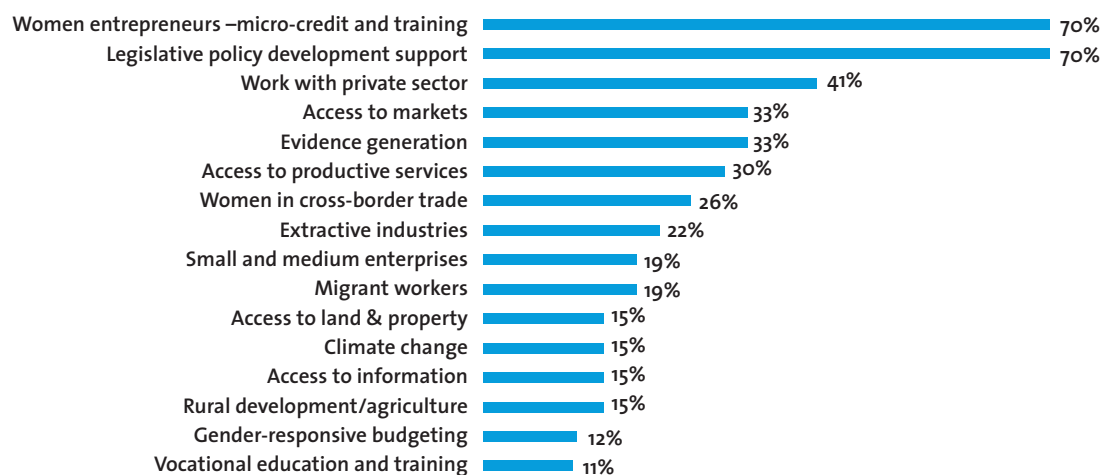


Figure 2.2b: Percentage breakdown of CO operational work on WEE²⁶



UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF); UNDP; UN Statistics; UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); UNCTAD; UNIDO; and UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Partnerships with World Bank, International Trade Centre, the private sector (e.g., The Coca-Cola Company) and with CSOs (particularly through the newly established Civil Society Advisory Groups, at global and country levels) have also been developed.

OPERATIONAL WORK: POLICY AND PROGRAMMES

UN Women operational work includes support to UN Member States to implement international standards, and gender-responsive policies, strategies and plans to advance gender equality and to forge effective partnerships with civil society. UN Women work within this mandate area is realized through country specific, multi-country, regional and global programmes.

More specifically, UN Women operational work has included: (a) the development and dissemination of policy and technical guidance (including guidance notes, policy briefs, strategic notes and other publications), data and research at the global level; (b) the design and implementation of global, regional and country-level programmes, including joint programmes and initiatives with other UN partners

and other entities (such as the private sector); and (c) the administration of the FGE²⁵, a global fund that is exclusively dedicated to women’s economic and political empowerment.

UN Women operational work at the country level includes different themes and its degree of focus and engagement in these different areas has varied significantly, from several connected initiatives spanning over a longer period of time and across mandates (as in the case of rural women, migrant workers’ rights and decent work for domestic workers), to one-off, short-term initiatives often related to a specific event (e.g., women’s participation in science and technology). Figure 2.2b below provides a summary of programming focus areas across UN Women COs (the numbers against each bar indicate the percentage of COs with operational work in each area). Data in the figure was based on a portfolio analysis of strategic notes, annual work plans and reports on the online results tracking system for 27 UN Women COs and also EE Section mapping documentation.

The main responsibility for WEE work at the HQ level formally rests within the EE Section in the

²⁵ See: <http://www.UNWomen.org/en/trust-funds/fund-for-gender-equality>.

²⁶ Source: portfolio mapping of 27 country offices based on strategic notes and annual reporting.

Policy Division. Other highly involved units are the Research and Data Section of the Policy Division, as well as the Intergovernmental Support Division, the UN Coordination Division, the Strategic Partnerships Division, the Programme Division, and the FGE Team. Thematic sections in the Policy Division have also worked on certain aspects of WEE, for example in relation to gender-responsive budgeting and national planning, post-conflict economic recovery, safe cities and markets, and women's economic and social rights. At the regional level, regional WEE advisers are being established in each region (three are currently in place) and at the country level, WEE work is covered by either specific advisers or managers and staff of WEE-related programmes or by staff working in other thematic areas (such as gender-responsive budgeting).

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES FOR WEE

Against the backdrop of organizational change that includes the progressive establishment of UN Women as a new organization and arrival of a new Executive Director with a strong interest and vision for UN Women's WEE work, new opportunities and directions for UN Women's WEE work have emerged. One such area has been UN Women's increased efforts around building partnerships with the private sector. This was recently manifested in the establishment of UN Women PSLAC in recognition of the important role played by the sector in all areas affecting WEE. The PSLAC aims to assist UN Women in expanding economic opportunities for women, enhancing their access to financial tools, increasing rural women's agricultural production and labour force participation, promoting access to skill development and quality public education to enhance women's broader workforce engagement at all levels and higher levels of education for girls and in

fostering public-private collaboration on closing the economic participation gender equality gap.²⁷

UN Women's unique positioning is derived from its mandate. The various historical groundings of its work in the security, development and human rights pillars of the United Nations also provide an important context for UN Women work in the area of WEE. There are also important and timely opportunities for UN Women to contribute to current development priorities such as poverty reduction, the post-2015 development framework, and the Beijing +20 review and appraisal of the implementation of the declaration and its platform for action.

Through efforts of IANWGE to establish a system-wide strategy and action plan on WEE, UN Women also seeks to influence WEE work within the UN system. The development of UN Women's Knowledge Gateway for WEE aims to provide an important opportunity to mobilize key actors and experts around WEE and to facilitate sharing of good practice. Finally, through the FGE, UN Women is supporting the implementation of gender equality commitments, including on WEE, on the ground by local, national and regional actors.

In the context of these emerging opportunities, the WEE Section has initiated important internal processes to review and reformulate its strategic vision and approach. This has included alterations made under Outcome Area 2 of the UN Women Strategic Plan and thematic internal and external consultation on WEE. This evaluation seeks to recognize and complement these ongoing processes by taking a formative perspective that seeks to build-off, inform, challenge and validate (as appropriate) UN Women efforts at improvement.

²⁷ Terms of Reference, Private Sector "Leaders Advisory Council" for Women's Economic Empowerment and Ending Violence Against Women, p.1.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 RELEVANCE OF UN WOMEN WORK IN WEE

Q1: To what extent has UN Women established a relevant, realistic, strategic, innovative and clear approach (covering normative, operational and coordination roles) for its work in support of WEE?



Finding 1: UN Women's portfolio of WEE interventions at global, regional and country levels are aligned with the goals and intended results of the strategic plans. This is a good basis for further strengthening links between activities and achieving outcomes based on the organization's evolving TOC for WEE.

The case studies, portfolio and documentation review provide ample evidence that the normative, operational and coordination work of UN Women at global, regional and country levels has corresponded to the 2011-2013 and 2014-2017 strategic plans and DRFs. For example, mapping of results and planned interventions at the country level demonstrate that COs all use strategic plan results frameworks for planning and reporting purposes.

The challenge faced by the organization is illustrated by the difference between the results framework and the reconstructed TOC described in the context section of this report (Figure 2.2b). Specifically, the strategic plan results frameworks do not sufficiently capture the conceptual underpinnings of UN Women work on WEE.

While the work of the entity has been aligned with the DRF, the absence of a clear internal vision and approach to WEE (see Finding 2) has led to a lack of cohesive vision on what aspects of WEE should be prioritized by UN Women and a wide array of approaches to WEE both at the global and country levels.

This situation has resulted in a mixture of responses from across the organization. There are some highly strategic interventions, such as regional cross-border trade programmes and the *Progress of the World's Women Report*, but there is also a substantial collection of small, sometimes quite ad hoc, initiatives in several different areas of intervention (ranging for example from business development support interventions, literacy training and training initiatives related to solar technology and energy saving stoves). These are not always reconcilable into a coherent whole.

Within the organizational context of flux and transition, it is quite an achievement that all of the country-level strategic notes from 2011 onwards are based on DRFs that are clearly linked to the strategic plan. Many were also found to include elements of a TOC adapted to their specific context. The challenge, however, is that UN Women's understanding and conceptual framework for WEE at the global level has been rapidly evolving. Insights from the case studies and portfolio review reveal the consequence of this: there are frequent gaps and misalignments between what is captured in documentation and what UN Women management and staff currently conceptualize as an implicit global TOC.

Confounding this situation further, conditions vary across regions of the world. The capacity of the organization to analyse and account for differences in the conditions under which WEE is sought has progressively increased. This requires an adaptation of the global TOC to these diverse local and regional conditions.

The evaluation case studies suggest that a period of consolidation will be needed to align the aspirational

UN WOMEN

CONTRIBUTION TO WEE 2011-2014

NORMATIVE

Post-2015
Rio+20
CSW

\$106.5m

Strategic Plan Goal 2
2011-2013



53 countries

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



74%

of UNDAF
documents
integrate WEE

2

UN Women
Training Centre
online courses

2000

Knowledge Gateway users

814

CEOs signed WEPs



27

Fund for Gender
Equality projects



focus of WEE work being led by HQ and the actual work being conducted at the country level. The natural rhythm of the programming cycle and limited corporate guidance on the current direction of WEE will both affect the length of time required for this consolidation.

An example of this delay in transmitting changes to COs is the thinking at HQ level that the entity should place a greater emphasis on affecting change at the macro and meso-level by addressing structural barriers to women's participation in labour markets. While senior management and staff within the Policy Section at HQ all agree that UN Women should shift away from micro-level interventions that target individual women, evidence from the portfolio review shows that 70 per cent of COs are still actively focusing on this area. This delay in consolidation can be attributed to a number of factors such as the challenges COs face in revising programmes (especially those connected with UNDAFs, which usually span four to five years). Other factors include capacity gaps at the country level where some staff continue to lack the guidance and direction they need to more effectively link their micro-level interventions to support meso- and macro-level policy or structural change targeting national and international policies, finance, institutions and legislation.

This situation can be illustrated by one of the intended results under UN Women's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan: *"strengthened skills, opportunities and enterprise development assistance for women to enhance their employment, sustainable livelihoods and resilience."* In reality, a meaningful amount of the work (particularly at the country level) in relation to this intended result has been focused primarily on income generation and micro-credit interventions.

While clearly targeted towards the promotion of gender equality at the individual level, livelihoods work has not sufficiently focused on the structural change, especially at the level of government, necessary to support a gender enabling economic environment.²⁸

²⁸ For example, increased gender-responsiveness of services requires public infrastructure investment to reduce women's care burden.

COs that operate only at the micro-level are not positioned to engage in governmental discussions (with ministries of planning and finance, for example) to promote the allocation of public funds to required expenditures (such as girls' education and training for women), national policies that lead to job creation, or systematic changes in bank lending practices that give women greater access to credit and, as a result, assets.

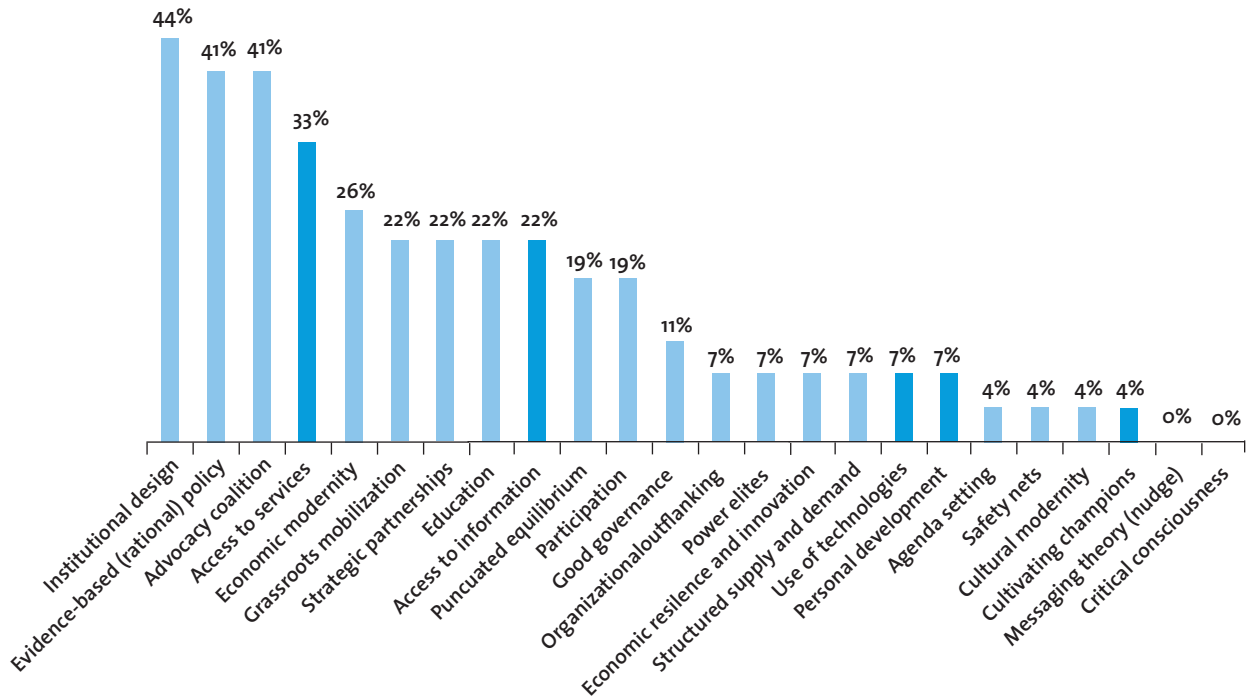
As such, while country-level activities and global/regional programmes address the strategic plan results framework, they are inconsistent in terms of alignment with UN Women's emerging global TOC. In particular, the theoretical basis by which micro-level interventions will contribute to high-level changes (such as *"women accumulate and control economic assets and resources that allow them to function effectively in the economy, build sustainable livelihoods and participate in labour and product markets on equal terms with men"* or *"the transition from unpaid to paid decent work."*) is not articulated in programme documents.

Alongside the country case studies, a mapping of the implicit TOCs underpinning the WEE portfolio reveals that the problem is not one of country-level awareness (see Figure 3.1a). The narrative of a country-level preference for focusing on the micro-level change is also hard to substantiate. Indeed, there is a strong preference at the country level for "structure-based" TOCs that reflects the current institutional perspective of UN Women (i.e., change happens through altering the structures, institutions and mechanisms of the economy). Structure-based theories are used four times more often than agency-based theories (i.e., that change happens through the actions of the individuals within a system).²⁹

Where agency-based approaches are used in WEE programmes, the dominant assumptions are that

²⁹ While there is a strong emphasis on access to services (33 per cent of countries) and information (22 per cent of countries), only 7 per cent are specifically using technology to achieve this. These services and information also relate largely to the theory of "economic modernity"—26 per cent of countries—(the theory that change happens as society gets wealthier and people demand greater equality) than to "cultural modernity"—4 per cent of countries—(change happens as societies adopt secular, individualistic and emancipatory worldviews).

Figure 3.1a: Mapping the implicit TOCs used in country-level WEE programming



Note: Theories based on change happening through altering “structures” are shaded light blue; theories based on change happening through affecting individuals’ agency are shaded blue.

increased access of women to services (typically financial services) and information enables them to participate more effectively within the economic system. However, the more predominant structure-based TOCs present a troika of strategies being used by UN Women COs that tend to go hand-in-hand:

- a) Institutional strengthening (government)
- b) Advocacy coalitions
- c) Evidence-based policy

Structure-based theories are a largely centralized, expert-led and policy-based approach, and seem to reflect both UN Women’s organizational strengths and the corporate TOC that was reconstructed for the evaluation.³⁰

³⁰ Still present in the underlying theories of change but much less prevalent are “popular movement” based approaches to creating change. The most frequently used is grass-roots mobilization, in 22 per cent of countries. Indeed, UN Women is avoiding Marxist theories entirely; with mobilization focusing on local groups rather than national or class-based approaches. Only 7 per cent of countries are attempting to use organizational-outflanking—the theory that the women’s movement can out manoeuvre entrenched elites through greater organization around common goals.

It fits within an overall worldview of “punctuated equilibrium”—that change takes place in big leaps based on critical points of inflection. In this case, those points of inflection are largely seen as policy changes. In other words, the implicit TOCs used by country-level programming do not assume that impact will be created mainly through micro-level interventions.

The challenge to be addressed moving forward thus appears to be two-fold:

- a) There is no *explicit* organization-wide TOC for consistently articulating how micro-level interventions are to translate to the higher-level WEE objectives of the Strategic Plan
- b) Yet, according to country case studies, COs also cannot abandon micro-level interventions because their key government counterparts (as well as donors and CSOs) demand to see “practical action” as a prequalification for having credibility at the policy table.

Critical systems heuristics

Critical systems heuristics is a structured way of looking at the different roles that stakeholders play within a system. Using data from the HQ and country case studies, the evaluation undertook this analysis for the normative, coordination and operational systems to which UN Women contributes. An assessment of the ideal situation is critiqued against an assessment of the actual situation in order to identify gaps and opportunities. The outputs from this analysis were integrated across the evaluation findings.

Some key opportunities identified by the analysis include:

- a) Scope for the normative systems to work more at the regional level, including engaging regional bodies such as customs and political unions.
- b) Scope for coordination skills to be specifically included and nurtured as part of UN Women's staff development planning.
- c) Scope for the EE Section to lead a common position for UN Women's operational work on WEE, including advancing its universal mandate.

The question then becomes how COs can strategically leverage micro-level interventions into more impact on macro-level policies in host countries. An example of this has been UN Women's micro-level work with women traders at the local level and how information gained on structural-level challenges facing the women was then followed up with interventions to support macro-level changes to trade policy at national and regional levels (see Finding 31 and Section 3.5 "Scalable good practices and lessons learned" area #5). This requires careful selection of micro-level policies that give UN Women greater legitimacy for the macro and meso-level policies on which it wants to have an influence.



Finding 2: UN Women has recognized that, despite the increased importance given to WEE within the entity, it remains the least developed and conceptualized thematic area and has begun to take action to address this.

There is strong consensus within UN Women at all levels that the entity's work on WEE has lacked conceptual clarity and strategic focus; 58 per cent of internal staff surveyed either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the entity's strategic vision for WEE is clear and consistent. UN Women recognizes that it has a problem.

In response to this strategic gap, UN Women has: (a) reconstituted the EE Section under the Policy Division, including recruiting feminist economists; (b) mapped the EE work of the organization and other UN entities; (c) conducted an internal thematic dialogue on EE held in November 2013³¹; and (d) convened a consultation with selected external stakeholders and partners in July 2014.

In preparation for the July 2014 consultations, the EE Section developed a WEE concept note³², which reflected the outcomes of the Internal Thematic Dialogue held in November 2013 and provided a framework for the July 2014 consultations. Further internal discussions with UN Women HQ, regional office and CO staff are planned in the remaining months of 2014, and a broader external consultation/validation meeting is planned at the end of 2014.

The goal of these processes, according to the EE Section, is to develop a roadmap for a strategic plan of action that will provide guidance for HQ activities and

³¹ The Thematic Dialogue on Economic Empowerment saw the participation of UN Women staff in the Policy Division (HQ) and country and regional offices to share their experiences, knowledge, and lessons learned to advance strategic thinking and planning on WEE. The Programme Division was also consulted.

³² UN Women Economic Empowerment Section Concept Note: Women's Economic Empowerment: A Framework for Consultation, 18 June 2014.

activities in the field.³³ The mapping, documentation review and evaluation interviews reveal that this will need to address the situation of relatively fragmented, often short-term, small-scale WEE initiatives. In doing so, however, it can also build on some stronger recurrent themes where these do already exist (including rural women, migrant and domestic workers' rights, and unpaid care work).

One dimension of the process underway is the EE Section's acknowledgement of the need to align WEE work with the entity's comparative advantage and constraints. So far, the EE Section's review processes have been grounded in extensive use of robust evidence, analysis and data, and on substantive inputs from experts.

As a result, the Policy Division has identified two main areas of engagement for UN Women in the next few years: (a) promoting women's access to land and productive resources; and (b) making visible all types of women's work and exploring the continuum from unpaid work to decent work.³⁴ Initial strategies for how UN Women can contribute to these two areas of work have also been articulated.³⁵ The June 2014 Concept Note pushes the understanding of the key issues affecting WEE and their correlations far beyond the existing WEE Guidance Note (2012), including highlighting different dimensions of poverty, barriers

to women's productive engagement in the labour market and causes of exclusions.

These are very important steps towards developing a clearer, well-grounded, relevant and focused approach to WEE. A further elaboration of this emerging conceptual framework will enable a comprehensive approach and TOC to be developed, and UN Women's expected contributions to different levels of change can as a result be clarified.

UN Women's previous experience of having a strategic gap between policy and programming guidance (see Finding 2) highlights the importance of translating the forthcoming global approach into practical (and flexible) guidance relevant to all levels of the organizations (HQ, regional offices and COs). In this respect, as part of the current process of redefining UN Women's vision and approach to WEE, specific attention is required to ensuring that inputs from different HQ sections, regional offices and COs are included to further inform and validate evolving perspectives and priorities.



Finding 3: In responding to current debates around WEE, thought leadership within UN Women has dissipated across the normative, operational, coordination and executive branches of HQ. Multiple visions and voices create challenges in aligning regional and country-level work with emerging global priorities.

Internal differences in the entity's overall vision for WEE has inhibited strategic coherence across the organization (as described in Findings 1 and 2). Within the formal structure of the organization, the EE Section holds the primary responsibility for shaping the entity's policy and strategy for WEE. Over the past four years it has consistently struggled to perform this role.

In part, the EE Section's challenges are due to staff turnover as well as capacity gaps. However, to explain the difficulty in developing strategic consensus as

33 According to the July 2014 Concept Note, "there are three steps envisaged: identifying with clarity the 'what we want' and in what sequence (prioritizing the domains of change and proposed interventions, identifying knowledge and data gaps, setting clear targets and 'indicators' etc.); understanding the 'how we can get there' analytically (what constitutes an enabling macroeconomic environment for women, what processes we need to be engaged in, which power relations must be transformed and between which actors, and what forms of inequalities will be most/least likely to change) and finally, exploring those key partnerships that can be leveraged to pursue these desired changes together." (p. 1)

34 See report on the November 2013 UN Women Internal Thematic Dialogue, June 2014 concept note, and July 2014 external consultations proceedings.

35 For example, these might include conducting policy research, distilling lessons learned from best practices, supporting policy formulation processes including legislative change, and engaging with the UN, multilateral bodies and CSOs.

residing with the level of staffing is to do an injustice to the individuals involved and a disservice to organizational learning. In the particular case of WEE, any analysis must also account for the profound and unusual resistance (politically, culturally, socially and economically) of the external environment to enabling consensus.

The evaluation has identified at least three major factors that have made it difficult to establish agreement in the area of WEE:

- a) Work on WEE draws its mandate primarily from social and economic rights. Such rights are progressive in nature, philosophically disputed, unenforceable, and hard to measure. Unlike other thematic areas in which UN Women works, WEE is unable to draw on the authority of first generation civil and political rights, and is thus subject to wider disagreements on how economic development takes place.
- b) WEE is conceptually evolving and as a foundation for WEE, the causes of gender inequality and women's economic status must be well understood. It has been understandably challenging for UN Women to identify where its intervention in this broad area of work can be most efficacious. Two aspects of current thinking on the causes of gender equality are: (i) approaches that emphasize women's lack of key assets, such as credit, education, skills; and (ii) the structural conditions in market economies, coupled with practices that reinforce gender stratification. Part of the tension at UN Women is in identifying which aspects of this work to prioritize. A second challenge is that structural change inevitably runs into resistance by those who benefit from the status quo. This is sometimes represented as a debate between the mainstream of economics and heterodox economics (often represented in the perspectives of UN agencies such as the UN Research Institute for Social Development, UNDP, UNCTAD and UNDESA). There remains little agreement within UN Women and among some external partners on the role of macroeconomic policy in perpetuating gender inequality. Organizations

such as World Bank are more likely to see the macro-economy and macroeconomic policy as gender neutral.³⁶ Within UN Women and feminist economic analysis, on which UN Women frequently relies, there is a strong and well-developed critique of mainstream macroeconomic policies. A question that remains for UN Women is how it wishes to position itself globally and relative to external partners such as World Bank vis-à-vis macroeconomic analysis and policy. While this area of intervention may be a contested one, it also holds promise for advancing WEE.

- c) UN Women, through its membership in particular processes, alignment to development goals, and structure of its regional architecture, is shaping itself within the development paradigm. While there is a body of work that argues the development arena is both political and politicized, the dominant discourse of development is a technocratic one (separate from international relations), with apolitical assistance to assist national governments to achieve agreed policy goals. While UN Women has the mandate to operate across the UN system (including in relation to the political wing), its WEE work has been located under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This implicitly situates EE as a technical problem and can thus underestimate the inherent political tensions of renegotiation of power between different political, social and gender groups.

As a consequence, work on WEE has been diffused across UN Women with initiatives and programmes spearheaded by different parts of the organization. Evidence from the case studies shows that other parts of the entity have filled some gaps in the strategic framework. Examples include the Research and Data Section's identification of key themes to be put forward in global policy dialogue events (such as unpaid care work in the post-2015 process), and the

³⁶ UN Women mainly has a heterodox economics and HRBA to WEE, while World Bank has a mainstream approach that emphasizes the "business case" or instrumentalist rationale for gender equality.

Peace and Security Section's work on women's role in post-conflict economic recovery.

This arrangement has created space for individual engagement and agency around WEE but has also led to diffused decision-making about UN Women's position on WEE at the normative level. The situation also extends to relationships with World Bank, where there has been direct engagement and personal leadership by the Executive Director in advancing this partnership.

Another factor is the recent process of rolling out the new regional architecture. UN Women inherited a very centralized structure (and culture) from its predecessors (in particular UNIFEM), and between 2012 and December 2013 it embarked on a process to decentralize its structure and work. With increased decentralized authority and presence, HQ is now in the process of redefining its own role, in terms of guidance and support to regions and countries as well as accountability lines. This is proving challenging in this transition period and evidence from the case studies and surveys revealed that there are different understandings among different parts of the organization (even within the Policy Section) on who is responsible for providing guidance to country and regional offices and for ensuring programmatic coherence.

At the country level, decision-making has been under the leadership of the individual UN Women staff and the Programme Division. One-on-one advice has been provided by the EE Section in some instances, in addition to comments on documents, but a consistent sense of leadership from the Policy Division has yet to emerge. Only 18 per cent of surveyed staff agreed or strongly agreed that the Policy Section's work on WEE at HQ has responded well to the needs and context of their offices.

While the EE Section has traditionally given inputs into various programmes, and programme documents, it has been overstretched in terms of fully engaging with all programme design processes. In the absence of programme-design guidance from the

Policy Division, the Programme Division has supported the development of WEE programmes, particularly at the country level.

These practices show that WEE capacity and expertise exist in the organization beyond the limited boundaries of the EE Section³⁷ and that it has been tapped to pursue WEE results when and as needed. This provides a level of resilience within the organization. However, without clear roles, responsibilities and institutionalized coordination, these practices have exacerbated an existing lack of coherence in the approach of UN Women to WEE.

While the evaluation finds that the process of strategic consolidation initiated by the EE Section is critical to its future relevance, in doing so it is equally important to recognize and further enable the capacity and contribution of other parts of the entity at all levels to WEE.

³⁷ For example, knowledge and expertise in WEE is strong in the Research and Data Section and widespread in the Programme Section, mainly related to field experience.

Q2: To what extent is UN Women strategically positioned to enhance WEE?

Finding 4: UN Women’s strong use of high quality expertise and evidence to revitalize its WEE approach and focus is well aligned to current understanding but may risk diluting its key advantage of having the willingness to be flexible, dynamic and innovative.

As noted in Finding 2, the entity is drawing heavily on expert evidence in clarifying its strategic vision and focus for WEE. This is established good practice. UN Women is using the very best of existing knowledge (based on historical and contemporary analysis) to design its response to disempowerment within the economic system. This will enable the organization

to be more focused, consistent, and evidence based. However, in considering UN Women’s strategic positioning, it is important to also consider what the future world might look like and to ensure that UN Women teams maintain the willingness to be innovative and flexible, even where the evidence base is limited.

Drawing on a number of global trends studies, the evaluation has identified eight potential “meta-trends” that are likely to impact WEE and finds that, while UN Women positioning on these is mixed, there is a lot of potential for WEE to be more forward-looking (Table 3.1a).

Table 3.1a: UN Women positioning in relation to global meta-trends

META-TREND	OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS FOR WEE	UN WOMEN POSITIONING
Advanced technologies in health, artificial intelligence, ubiquitous connectivity	<p>The immediate opportunity for many women will be connection to the Internet through mobile technology. Companies such as Facebook and Google will drive this.</p> <p>Cheaper access to automated software will displace some skilled and semi-skilled jobs (such as accountants) but will also make their work easier and more productive.</p>	<p>Globally, UN Women has no single strategy for the Internet or engendering its expansion.</p> <p>At the country level, there is some experience with information and communications technology (ICT) training, mobile technology and eGov platforms that can be built upon, as well as the Knowledge Gateway.</p>
Soft innovation (creating premium products and value addition)	<p>Interest in premium products will reduce the value that can be captured from commoditized goods produced by many women.</p> <p>There will be opportunities for those who can create and market premium experiences from existing products.</p>	<p>UN Women has started gender analysis of value chains in some countries.</p> <p>Marketing and understanding of the creative economy are acknowledged weaknesses.</p>
Competition for skilled labour	<p>Aging populations in the West and the growth of China and India will create demand for new managerial talent. The extent to which women benefit depends on education and human resources management.</p>	<p>The organization is just beginning to explore vocational education and training.</p> <p>The idea of developing model gender-responsive human resources management systems has been raised by at least one country.</p>
Urbanization	<p>Each year, 65 million people are added to the urban population, approximately half of whom are women. Providing services to new urbanites is a key opportunity for businesses.</p> <p>More women will face pressures to engage in vulnerable work and sex work, because they have more limited opportunities for employment in well-paid jobs than men.</p>	<p>Work on safe cities and markets are good platforms for collaboration with WEE objectives.</p>

META-TREND	OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS FOR WEE	UN WOMEN POSITIONING
A growing (but insecure) middle class	<p>By 2020, an estimated 500 million women will be added to households with more than 5,000 U.S. dollars in income per year.</p> <p>There will be increased household income driven by existing factors, but how will countries alleviate what for many women is a double burden of paid and unpaid work?</p>	<p>Work in Latin America and Asia on unpaid work is an important starting point, but more can be done to support intra-household dynamics, culture and to promote control of assets.</p>
Aging OECD countries	<p>Social protection is being rolled back in rich countries, creating a negative precedent.</p> <p>Opportunities for migrants are increasing for care work and to meet labour gaps in rich countries.</p>	<p>Work in the Global Migration Group and country experience can be built upon.</p> <p>UN Women is currently undertaking a study on gender equality, poverty reduction and macroeconomic impacts of expanding public care provisioning in Turkey.</p>
Multipolar	<p>The disbursement of global power away from the United States and Western Europe is not accompanied by an alternative economic paradigm, leaving capitalism unconstrained by a need to display beneficence.</p>	<p>UN Women is aligned with a global governance system that may become less ubiquitous.</p> <p>Relationships with rising powers (e.g., BRICS development bank) are limited and with little leverage.</p>
Competition over food, energy, water and raw commodities	<p>The cost of living for many vulnerable women will grow significantly.</p> <p>Women are poorly positioned to benefit from water and energy.</p> <p>The feminization of agriculture may support women's livelihoods if productivity can be increased. It is, however, possible that as agricultural employment becomes visibly productive, the process of feminization may be reversed.</p>	<p>UN Women has developed strong partnerships on rural women and with the Global Forum on Agricultural Research.</p> <p>It is not so well positioned in relation to climate change resilience.</p>



Finding 5: The strategic prioritization of WEE on development (and the MDGs) has led UN Women to focus on one part of its universal mandate, with implications for its operational choices as well as its natural allies.

In the UN Women 2014-2017 Strategic Plan (which was approved by Member States in the Executive Board), changes were made to Goal 2 related to WEE to include a more explicit focus on ensuring that women are economically empowered *and benefit from development*. The focus on poverty in the Strategic Plan is also aligned with the focus of the QCPR on improving

effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of UN operational activities for development and country-level modalities of the UN system. The decision of Member States in the UN Women Executive Board to prioritize a developmental focus, in particular the MDGs, has excluded large numbers of women from being considered as potential clients for UN Women programming in the area of WEE.

For example, there is no provision for operational work in support of marginalized women in OECD countries. In countries where UN Women is operationally present, the focus on poverty has excluded programmes from supporting women leaders of larger enterprises—even those that have more potential to generate sustainable employment opportunities for other women.

Related to this, evidence from the portfolio review of 27 UN Women COs demonstrates that, across the organization, there is an overall trend of increased spending per woman in low-income countries than higher income countries. Comparing the average budget-per-woman (in US dollars) of UN Women country operations with gross national per capita income in 2013 reveals that spending is significantly higher in lower income countries, falling dramatically for higher income countries.

By comparison, there is a lower correlation between budget-per-woman and the UNDP Gender Inequality Index, suggesting that resource allocations are more aligned with poverty than gender equality and women's empowerment.

This evaluation finds that the emphasis on the development paradigm and the use of nation states as the targeting unit for poverty has three main implications for UN Women work on WEE:

- Different organizational infrastructure in rich countries (national committees) and poor countries (COs) creates a narrative of “rich other” helping a “poor other”, emphasizing the identities of donor and beneficiary, and dissipating the narrative of women everywhere as common allies for self-empowerment³⁸
- It emphasizes individual wealth creation and social welfare over economic justice, job creation and control of assets
- It undervalues UN Women's partnership with the women's movement in favour of governments

There is little evidence that COs are equipped with the normative capacity to critically address the dominant economic paradigm, and—as a result—the focus on

the poorest women (who are generally necessity entrepreneurs) leads to instrumentalist policy adjustments rather than advocacy for transformative change.

For example, the organization is maintaining dialogue with organized labour, but this is largely in terms of consultation. It would be interesting for UN Women to consider elevating its work with organized labour to the same extent it has prioritized private sector partnerships. Unlike ILO, UN Women has not established a representative tripartite structure to manage the interests of different capitalist economic classes in relation to WEE.

In its efforts to advance WEE, there also appears to be significant scope for UN Women to do more in terms of fully valuing and strategically developing its relationship with the women's movement as a powerful extension of both parties' normative reach. One such example is to support the engagement and active participation of women (including rural, poor and marginalized women) in the development, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies and national development plans.

Based on the staff survey, interviews and strategic notes, there is consensus within UN Women that greater efforts are needed to engage men and boys as allies within its operational and normative work in order to increase understanding and cultural support for women's economic rights.³⁹ The HeForShe campaign (which started with ending violence against women) is now a potential catalyst for beginning to address this. There are also good examples at the country level of grass-roots organizations that are mobilizing men as allies for women's empowerment (such as Promundo in Brazil)⁴⁰, and there is a strong case for developing such efforts at all levels.

³⁸ Evidence from the non-profit sector also suggests that people are more likely to donate to organizations where they feel they have benefitted (for example, an old school or a childbirth charity). This suggests that more women could be engaged as volunteers and donors to support UN Women if they felt the organization “belonged to” and directly benefitted them.

³⁹ In UN Women's response to the Secretary-General's request for forward looking proposals to present to the Chief Executives Board on the UN system being “fit for purpose”, greater engagement with men and boys at global, regional and country levels is identified as a future priority area.

⁴⁰ Promundo is a Brazilian NGO that works internationally to engage men and boys in promoting gender equality and end violence against women.



Finding 6: UN Women is approaching a tipping point, beyond which the goodwill towards its brand and power of its mandate will need to be matched by the entity in meeting expectations for global leadership on WEE.

Among interviewees, survey respondents and focus group participants, there is clear evidence of consensus that the mandate of UN Women has been accepted, that UN Women is the undisputed gender equality and women's empowerment expert within the UN system, and that UN Women is recognized as the organization giving voice to women's rights and empowerment inside the United Nations. The HQ and country case studies provide important evidence of how association with the UN Women brand can give moral, political and technical credibility to partners (e.g., the private sector), and a stronger voice to women's advocates.

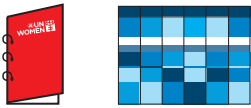
Compared to other UN agencies working on gender equality and women's empowerment, UN Women is unique because of its triple mandate (normative, coordination and programmatic). The vast potential of combining these three mandates to support and promote WEE worldwide is widely acknowledged by consulted stakeholders, and it compensates for UN Women's still developing and relatively light field presence and overall small size and weight. This potential has not been fully explored and operationalized, however, as far as WEE is concerned. There is a strongly recognized need to further develop the connections between the three mandates not only substantially, but also operationally (see Finding 7 for more detail).

UN Women has also inherited a long-term, well established relationship with CSOs, in particular the women's movement, which is highly valued by other UN agencies and external actors who do not have the same tradition, and by Member States and governments, who can, through UN Women, gain access to this constituency.

At the same time, UN Women also has privileged access and good relationships with governments. This is very important to CSOs and the private sector because UN Women can help them open doors that would otherwise mostly be closed to them. In this respect, UN Women has political capital to play at the global, regional and country level through its important convening role (see Finding 7 for more detail).

As found by the previous corporate evaluations, the expectation of what UN Women *should* do remains high, but the expectation of what it *can* do in WEE is lower. At the country level, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UNDP and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) all maintain substantial capacity in coordination and programming related to gender equality. While they have made space for UN Women to establish its presence, donors are impatiently seeking strong technical and strategic leadership on WEE. Maintaining UN Women's mandate advantage will increasingly come to depend on perceptions of how well it can deliver this leadership and the extent to which it can buttress its technical capacities.

Q3: To what extent does the UN Women approach complement and add value to that of its key partners? Are there areas where UN Women should or should not be working, given the expertise of its key partners?



Finding 7: Operationally, UN Women has had to be creative to overcome size, capacity and resource constraints. Its most promising approach has been to develop a strong role in convening and facilitating dialogue between mixed groups of stakeholders.

According to the internal survey, 81 per cent of UN Women staff saw the entity’s ability to convene and facilitate dialogue between multiple stakeholders as an organizational strength. For example, in Rwanda, FGE has been supporting bridging initiatives to bring together government and civil society—through district level roundtables and mobile law clinics—to address land rights and discriminatory customary practices relating to inheritance in de facto unions. The global survey also emphasized this role (including supporting the women’s movement to engage in such dialogue), as did the EE Section’s own consultation.

Overall, UN Women capacity and ability to influence WEE at the global, regional and country level has been somewhat hampered by its structural funding gap. The fuzzy set analysis clearly indicates that resources are a major contributing factor to effectiveness (see Section 3.2 for more details). This problem was raised by the majority of consulted stakeholders, by the Executive Board during its meetings, and was highlighted in UN Women annual reports and the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. The impact of resource constraints was also stated in UN Women’s response to the Secretary-General’s request for forward looking proposals on the UN system being “fit for purpose”, where it was noted that “[t]he lack of predictable, sustainable funding remains a significant constraint and impedes its ability to take successful initiatives to scale.”⁴¹

41 UN Women’s response to the Secretary-General’s request for forward looking proposals to present to the Chief Executives Board on the UN system being “fit for purpose”, p. 3.

In addition to the corporate funding shortage, UN Women has experienced challenges in mobilizing non-core funds for its WEE work at the global level. One example has been the Joint Programme on Rural Women with the Rome-based agencies which, after almost two years from its launch, has mobilized only 5 per cent of its total budget at the global level.⁴²

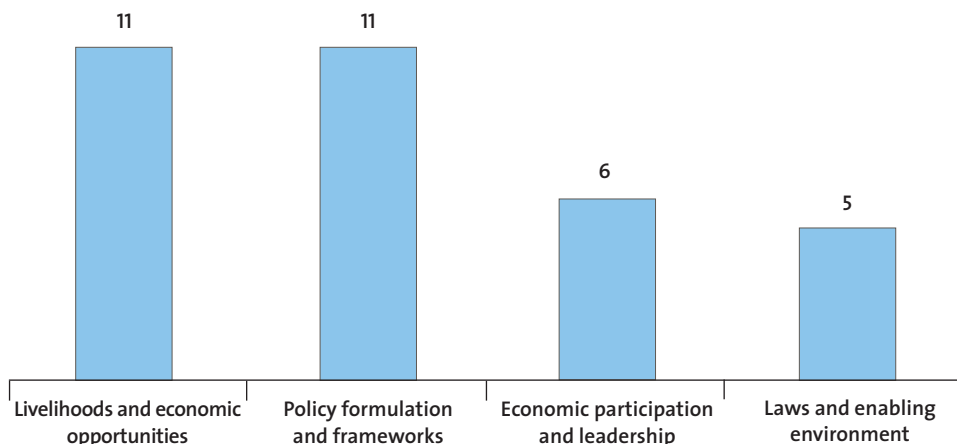
The EE Section has been chronically under-resourced, particularly in terms of trained economists⁴³ although this is now starting to change following the recruitment of two economists. This sentiment is shared internally by the EE Section, by the vast majority of interviewed UN Women staff in other sections, and by external partners

In terms of capacities, although UN Women knowledge and expertise on gender equality and women’s empowerment are broadly acknowledged, specific WEE expertise in macroeconomics, private sector

42 The evaluation team considered this programme in Nepal and also spoke with global stakeholders, including FAO, WFP and Global Forum on Agricultural Research. According to some, the difficulty in mobilizing funds was related to the challenging financial context in which the programme was developed, with donors facing significant financial constraints and limitations in disbursing new funds, or in some cases, unconvinced donors who saw the programme as one of many funding requests. According to others, while the programme was able to mobilize generic attention from donors, it failed to mobilize them financially because it was too broad and unspecific in its design overall. Other stakeholders felt that there was unclear follow-up (in terms of which agency was driving fundraising efforts). A combination of these explanations seems plausible. It should be mentioned however that, at the country level, the partner agencies have been able to mobilize some funds to start specific activities. In Nepal, the country and other agencies were on board, but donors saw plenty of other options available to them to fund and the national context has not been supportive of joint programming and the partnership has—as yet—been unable to communicate its unique technical advantage in a convincing way.

43 WEE section financial resources for 2013: budget 1.5 million U.S. dollars; core resources allocated: 600,000 U.S. dollars (of which 400,000 already committed for previous year activities); remaining resources for 2013 programming 200,000 U.S. dollars. WEE section human resources (planned): 1 director, 3 P5, 3 P3/P2; human resources (actual): Chief of Section position still vacant; one staff member on maternity leave, not replaced yet.

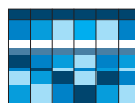
Figure 3.1b: Number of other UN entities working on aspects of WEE (EE Section mapping)



The Global Forum on Agricultural Research has forged an approach of bringing together diverse stakeholders, many of whom (such as transnational corporations and farmers' groups) have very different perspectives on the future of agriculture. Rather than focusing on their differences, the forum has helped to shape shared narratives around common problems that these stakeholders want to solve together. As a facilitator, the Global Forum on Agricultural Research promotes the work of its members first and builds engagement through its role as a trusted broker.

Convening dialogue is powerful precisely because it can transform UN Women capacity from a constraint on what can be done to a platform for others to lead and deliver change.

An environmental mapping of UN agencies by the UN Women EE Section reveals the potential of this comparative advantage to unleash resources, with 11 other UN entities working on some of the core issues that UN Women is seeking to address (see Figure 3.1d).



development, and sustainable development has been and remains limited.⁴⁴

At the regional and country level, however, there has been some success in mobilizing resources for WEE. In cases where countries have overcome resource and capacity constraints, ample evidence suggests that an important comparative advantage of UN Women is its ability to convene and coordinate joint efforts on WEE and build best practices.

As Section 3.2 of this evaluation discusses, there is a risk that UN Women is tempted to favour programming based on its self-assessed capacity to “do” rather than the priorities and needs in each context.

Finding 8: Current attempts at micro economic support to entrepreneurs face four overwhelming challenges: (a) they do not seem to be reaching the most vulnerable, (b) they do not differentiate UN Women in a meaningful way from other organizations working in this area, (c) there is very limited evidence to suggest that women entrepreneurs have improved their economic outcomes or business survival, and (d) there are limited options to scale up outreach.

A major feature of UN Women programming on WEE, particularly among rural women, has been providing support to individual and small groups of women entrepreneurs. According to mapping of 27 UN Women COs, 70 per cent have focused their

⁴⁴ The limitations are in regards to the number of people with specific expertise dedicated to these areas of work.

programming on supporting women entrepreneurs (see Figure 2.2b in Section 2.2). However, the entity is not the only organization supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

At the country level, a number of international actors (including World Bank, IFC, World Trade Organization and UNCDF) are working to increase women's access to microfinance and to position women to be suppliers and to integrate into value chains.

MSMEs have become a central pillar of current development thinking around growth and job creation and in 2010, multi-lateral development banks, bilateral and development finance institutions' support to SMEs totaled approximately 24.5 billion U.S. dollars.⁴⁵ Furthermore, more than 300 public and private investment funds have collectively committed more than 21 billion U.S. dollars to MSMEs.⁴⁶

The logic of positioning MSMEs as the engine of growth is data on job creation. In some developing economies, 90 per cent of all employment is in SMEs, and as a result, *“supporting micro and small enterprises has increasingly come to be viewed as a ‘quick fix’ to boost job creation for the young and growing populations of Africa, the Middle East and Asia”*.⁴⁷

Empirical evidence suggests, however, that while SMEs account for a large share of job creation, they also account for a disproportionate share of business failures and job destruction. Even in the least developed economies, large and small firms perform essentially the same in terms of net job creation and overall growth. Smaller firms have persistently higher job turnover and persistently lower wages than large firms, and employees also lack access to the social security and benefits found in larger enterprises.⁴⁸

45 Page and Söderbom, “Is small beautiful? Small enterprise, aid and employment in Africa”, UNU-WIDER, 2012.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid. It is now recommended that aid projects addressing small enterprises should therefore target the following three objectives through an improved investment climate: (a) increasing the survival rate of small firms to preserve jobs, (b) accelerating the growth rate of surviving firms, and (c) closing the wage gap between small and large enterprises.

Loans to individual women in low-income economies are, in the main, targeted at women engaged in entrepreneurial ventures out of necessity rather than choice. These women run enterprises because they have to in order to survive. In reality, they are seeking out access to finance to “create” their own employment: shifting responsibility for job creation onto individuals who are the most vulnerable economic actors.

High business failure rates in MSMEs globally suggest that this is a real risk within micro-entrepreneurship projects. However, UN Women is not monitoring this aspect of its programmes, nor has it developed mechanisms for protecting women borrowers (e.g., through offering loan guarantees or insurance against shocks) that would be required under a “do no harm” framework.

Other risks identified by the evaluation are inadvertent. Micro-enterprise loans and entrepreneurship promotion draw women unsuspectingly into the capitalist economic relationship with their community—withholding profits, accumulating capital and investing for personal gain. These behaviours are counter to the moral economy of the peasant⁴⁹ on which most rural women depend for survival.

As identified during the appraisal of the Coca-Cola partnership work in South Africa, no provision has yet been made for equipping women entrepreneurs with the awareness and skills to engage with the reaction of communities to their new role as both capitalists and independent businesswomen.

Overall, there is little evidence available to suggest that “creating” entrepreneurs through micro loan programs creates demand for the goods and services they sell, especially once the immediate opportunities in a community economy have been occupied by first-movers. Furthermore, the information cost of identifying market opportunities for each woman in each context makes it impossible for UN Women to realistically intervene on a more tailor-made basis.

49 Scott JC, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, Yale University Press, 1977.

The evaluation has found no reliable study that argues women thrive on business training and micro credit. Naila Kabeer’s review of the literature in this area concludes that microfinance seems to benefit women living above the poverty line more than those living below the poverty line, for a variety of reasons.⁵⁰

Moreover, this micro-level approach to EE is problematic in that it is risky, leads to volatility of income at best, and therefore does not provide economic security for a broad range of women. According to the internal evaluation survey (which is informed by UN Women country experience in this area), 84 per cent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that necessity entrepreneurs are rarely in the position to grow their micro enterprises into SMEs that provide significant levels of sustainable and decent employment for others.

Furthermore, it was observed that in the projects focused on income generation (many of which have to restrict themselves to income objectives to be culturally acceptable), the pathways from income growth to wider empowerment were largely unintentional and only broadly defined. This is a weakness, especially as the literature review reveals very little evidence to support the hypothesis that individual empowerment leads, automatically, to group or community empowerment.

While a number of projects identified the intention of establishing networks and community leadership mechanisms into which women with more income (and confidence) could step, these features were least developed during implementation, with the primary focus being on delivering business development services, training or access to finance.

In light of these challenges to using support for women entrepreneurs to achieve WEE goals, the evaluation has identified at least two systemic responses to residual unemployment of women as alternatives to micro-enterprise services: (a) addressing

⁵⁰ UNDESA, “2009 world survey on women in development: Women’s control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance”.

the economic context of the triple burden of work; and (b) enabling the role of the state in stimulating full employment.

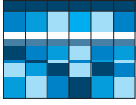
With regard to the first response, the EE Section is currently developing a model of the *continuum from unpaid to decent work* to support WEE programming, which emphasizes reduction of women’s care burden. This is likely to be useful, as the evaluation was unable to identify a single WEE programme that addresses the triple burden of work that women face⁵¹ in a holistic and systemic way.

Within the real world resource constraints that UN Women operates, addressing all of these issues is a major challenge. However, research from Harvard University on high-impact social organizations in the United States indicates that the greatest impact is from approaches that address women’s lives “in-the-round” (Full Frame Foundation).⁵² In response to this finding, the researchers advocate moving away from the trend of creating and applying model programmes towards creating locally embedded networks that can link women with opportunities, services and support.

In relation to the second response—the role of the state in stimulating full employment—by remaining only, or mostly, at the micro-level, UN Women is precluded or heavily restricted from proactively engendering strategies for future sources of job creation that meet decent work standards. By implication, a programme strategy based on women’s micro-enterprises is unlikely to create an impact beyond the immediate and limited number of people it reaches.

⁵¹ This relates to: (a) unrecognized, under-supported and undervalued reproductive work of women that is not displaced by increased levels of productive work (either because of the cost of care services, lack of public social provision, or failure to implement policy); (b) underpaid and vulnerable productive work compared to male counterparts; and (c) structural marginalization (such as contribution-based pensions that continue the gender wage gap, career progression that requires uninterrupted years of service, business deals that rely on after-work social networking, or cultural norms about areas of the economy open to women).

⁵² See www.fullframeinitiative.org.



Finding 9: UN Women is uniquely positioned to complement the work of others and address structural challenges to women’s access to finance.

As elaborated under Finding 7, focusing on micro-credit at the individual level misses the structural challenges women face: limited ownership of assets restricts their ability to borrow. The evaluation reviewed impact evaluations of micro-finance interventions, which find that NGO-based finance consistently underperforms (in terms of growth) compared to the formal banking system.

Among the major obstacles encountered in the EE of women are shortages of resources—especially finance and equipment—and a lack of collateral, which inhibits women from accessing credit, marketing facilities and decision-making on issues concerning production and productive capacity. Other challenges relate to education and skills, poor access to markets and lack of understanding of trade agreements. The majority of women-run businesses are located in the lowest end of the informal sector, often characterized by low earnings.

Working in partnership with World Bank and UNCDF, the evaluation finds that there is a strong case for UN Women (including FGE) to shift towards supporting women at a collective level in identifying and addressing bottlenecks that deny women (and poor men) access to finance. The entrepreneurial success of self-help groups, most of them of women, with policy support from the government and financial assistance from organized financial institutions in some countries can serve as a model. In addressing barriers related to access to finance, UN Women interventions should focus on supporting financial institutions to identify gender-responsive solutions to credit and lending barriers.

There is a need, therefore, for banks to be incentivized to extend credit to women. Partners such as Women’s World Banking are seeking to support this by articulating

Viet Nam and Moldova: Addressing structural barriers to women’s access to credit

In Viet Nam, UN Women supported the development of evidenced-based knowledge on gender aspects of women’s savings and credit and on women’s micro-finance institutions and is now planning, in collaboration with other UN agencies, to support the Viet Nam’s Women’s Union and State Bank of Viet Nam to advocate for national regulations and guidance on supporting access to finance and credit of women in rural areas.

In Moldova, future work is focused on improving women’s access to financial and other productive resources to deliver higher returns. Partnerships are planned with commercial banks, micro-finance institutions, National Commission for Financial Market, National Bank of Moldova, vocational education and training schools, and the Ministry of Education with the view to provide better access to financial services and entrepreneurship support to women, especially from vulnerable groups.

the value of women as a market and designing tailor-made products. Another mechanism is the role of national governments, through such policies as loan guarantees and central bank tools such as asset-based reserve requirements.⁵³ This implies national level policies rather than micro-level interventions to achieve the goal of sustainable livelihoods. UN Women is uniquely positioned to engage with government on these issues.

While it relates to government services, rather than financial services, the experience of UN Women Moldova is interesting in this regard. The participatory videos prepared as part of the evaluation process highlighted significant impact in reach and sustainability through working at the meso level, but any service needs to be seen as just one factor among the thousands in women’s lives that determine their economic situation.

⁵³ Central banks can use these tools to incentivize banks to lend to strategic sectors of the economy, such as women farmers. See, for example, Epstein G, “Central banks as agents of employment creation”, UNDESA Working Paper No. 38, ST/ESA/2007/DWP/38, 2007, http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2007/wp38_2007.pdf.



Finding 10: UN Women has gained important credibility and authority through the normative gains it helped to lead in advancing a rights-based approach to WEE. Establishing similar capacity and authority in influencing macroeconomic policy is proving to be a major challenge.

UN Women's contribution to normative work (see Section 3.2) has helped it advance towards a position of global leadership in shaping a rights-based approach to WEE. Until now, external partners do not regard it as having sufficient internal expertise to contribute substantively to macroeconomic policy debates and influence structural change within national economies in the same way.

This perception is due to first, the limited number of PhD economists at UN Women, and second, philosophical differences on macroeconomic policy between UN Women and some of its external partners (noted in Finding 3). This can explain why there is belief among some stakeholders that an emphasis on macroeconomic policy from a human rights perspective may not have much traction in economic space.

While the different approaches to gender equality of, for example, Bretton Woods institutions (which generally emphasize an instrumentalist approach) and UN Women's rights-based thinking may be seen at odds, there is a potential comparative advantage for UN Women in this area to articulate an alternative set of macroeconomic policies than are advanced by the IFIs, which tend to dominate debates. Thus, UN Women's voice in expanding the menu of viable macroeconomic policy remedies that can promote the structural change needed to achieve gender equality could fill a noticeable void in the policymaking world.

The challenge of engaging with the IFIs extends beyond UN Women's limited capacity in the area of macroeconomics. Apart from that issue, the two entities operate from different schools of thought (IFIs neoclassical

economics and UN Women as well as other UN entities a heterodox framework). Advancing an alternative perspective would be an important step in the process of promoting WEE since macroeconomic policies and economic institutions shape the possibilities for women to achieve WEE in any country. One of the key areas to influence in relation to gender and macroeconomics is that of fiscal space, the domain of IMF. While IMF tends to have an austerity stance on this issue (thus limiting public expenditures), the United Nations and UN Women in particular are in a position to argue for a human development approach to public investment.⁵⁴ UN Women has some expertise in this area from a gender perspective, although UN Women working as a lone voice is not advised. Rather, to be effective in advancing an alternative perspective that frames public spending as an investment, UN Women could effectively collaborate with other UN agencies with expertise in the area of public spending (for example, UNDP, ECOSOC and others). This grouping, which operates under a different paradigm than IMF, collectively has the right expertise and as such can have a more powerful voice in the fiscal space and public spending arena, both of which are crucial areas for WEE.

Moreover, other entities are important to engage in influencing macroeconomic policy and macro-level policies (macroeconomic policies refers to the traditional tools of fiscal and monetary policy, while macro-level policies refers to policies that have economy-wide effects, along with implications for employment, income, economic security and overall well-being). For example, the treasuries of the OECD countries can also influence macroeconomic and macro-level policies in developing countries. In addition, it will be important to work with emerging economies that are engaging in South-to-South funding. This provides an opportunity to influence policies to be gender sensitive and rights-based. To achieve this, however, UN Women will require a significant boost to its expertise at HQ, regional and country levels in macroeconomics and, more specifically, in advancing a rights-based approach in this work.

⁵⁴ This is embodied in Roy R, Heuty A, Fiscal Space: Policy Options for Financing Human Development, 2009.

While macroeconomic policy work is referenced widely within UN Women, there is an acknowledged lack of singular understanding across the organization (particularly at the country level) about what is entailed within this work. The case studies found that a number of CO staff regard macroeconomic policy work as within the remit of banks and finance institutions and not relevant to the mandate of UN Women.

Overall, there is a general lack of familiarity within the organization about what macroeconomic policy work is for UN Women and what interventions it entails. For example, many of the same COs that saw UN Women as lacking a mandate in this area were involved with supporting trade policies and economic-related laws (see also Finding 1 on links between country work and global priorities).

In addition, given UN Women's universally recognized expertise in gender-responsive budgeting, the evaluation has identified a number of promising areas for potential macroeconomic work:

- a) Exploring the links between financial liberalization and gender inequality, including convening academics and other experts to advance proposals for taming global finance.
- b) The relationship between gender equality and fiscal space.
- c) Innovative proposals on central bank policy that can address credit constraints women farmers and entrepreneurs face.
- d) Tracking actual national expenditure vis-à-vis gender-responsive budgets.

Partnerships, particularly the working relationships with UNDP and UNDESA, are critical in this regard. UN Women could also usefully expand its relationship to UNCTAD, given their contributions to alternative macroeconomic policies and structural change.

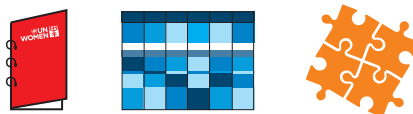
The potential and good will exists for UN Women to also increase its limited leverage with the Bretton Woods institutions (including the World Trade Organization). For example, there is great interest in UN Women's role in the Gender Equality Community

of Practice for Finance Ministers. There are some clear areas of agreement and commonality that will be of benefit to pursue, including gender-responsive budgeting. That said, there are also areas of significant differences in viewpoints, including in monetary, trade, and financial liberalization policies.

The evaluation finds that setting itself in opposition to Bretton Woods institutions is unlikely to advance UN Women objectives for gender-responsive macroeconomic policy. Greater success is likely to be had from using engagement around common ground to create space for, and draw attention to, academic and civil society research and policy proposals on alternative macroeconomic policies.

It should be noted that the Bretton Woods institutions are not monolithic, and within them exists a diversity of perspectives. With a robust macroeconomic team, there is an opportunity for UN Women to enlarge the space for discussions on macroeconomic policies that promote gender equality, and to explore the associated structural changes that are needed.

Similarly, at the country level, if UN Women develops its work priorities in the area of macroeconomics, it will be important to ensure that COs have access to the requisite skills and knowledge necessary to engage with relevant ministries. At present, the main leverage UN Women has with economic ministries is through its relationship with UNDP and inter-ministerial links to ministries/institutions responsible for the promotion of gender equality. Each CO will need to review whether these arrangements are sufficient in their context.



Finding 11: There is strong demand for UN Women to transform itself into a knowledge hub for WEE. The triple mandate, Knowledge Gateway, Training Centre, and country-level presence make this a real, and exciting, possibility.

Evidence from the case studies and surveys demonstrated that one of UN Women's most significant

contributions is its role in harnessing and disseminating knowledge and information related to WEE. External and internal survey participants rated UN Women most highly in terms of highlighting and supporting successful examples of WEE work.

The organization is also considered very strong in terms of learning tools and processes. The Knowledge Gateway was consistently held up as good practice and has begun to position UN Women as a knowledge hub on WEE, enabling the exchange of information and practice amongst a diverse groups of stakeholders (see Section 3.2).

Another important comparative advantage for UN Women is in supporting efforts to create an enabling environment for WEE through increased work on evidence generation (supporting data, statistics, studies and evidence-based advocacy) and then transmitting this information to relevant actors to support and inform their operational work in this area.

According to evidence from the case studies and surveys, UN Women is increasingly regarded as a thought leader in relation to WEE as a result of its important role in influencing the post-2015 process and in relation to its upcoming publication, *World Survey on Women in Development 2014*.

Furthermore, through its coordination mandate and Training Centre, UN Women is well positioned to support mainstreaming of WEE into the work of the wider UN system and to influence the economic infrastructure within the UN.

While there are mixed views amongst stakeholders about the extent to which UN Women has the capacity to lead research in the area of WEE (due largely to its limited macroeconomic policy expertise), partnerships with academics and their organizations⁵⁵ are effectively used by the entity to leverage expertise that is beyond its capacity.

⁵⁵ These include the International Working Group on Gender, Macroeconomic and International Economic Policy (GEM-IWG) and its regional groups, the International Association for Feminist Economics, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing, and Organizing (WIEGO), and the Centre for Global Women's Leadership.

Knowledge Gateway

In 2012, UN Women launched the global project, "Knowledge Gateway on Women's Economic Empowerment" with funding from Canada toward the overall development goal that "Women, in particular the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development". In December 2013, the gateway was awarded the Sitecore site of the Year Award 2013, which recognizes winning organizations for outstanding websites that create top-notch digital experiences for their users. In its first six months, the Knowledge Gateway had 50,000 visitors and 2,000 women and men from 160 developed and developing countries registered to contribute to this global community.

At the country level, there was found to be a demand for UN Women to provide leadership in understanding and representing the most disadvantaged groups in each country. Both its country strategies and the FGE hold the promise of being able to support action research to identify ways of diagnosing informal economic systems and reaching the most vulnerable women in different contexts around the world.

An example of this has been UN Women work on time-use surveys that has been aligned with the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, which called for better gender statistics, including those that document the scope and magnitude of women's work and contribution to the economy by "*recogniz[ing] and mak[ing] visible the full extent of the work of women and all their contributions to the national economy, including their contribution in the unremunerated and domestic sectors*" by "*conduct[ing] regular time-use studies to measure, in quantitative terms, unremunerated work.*"⁵⁶ Time-use surveys provide important evidence of the gendered division of labour within households and the interdependence of women's and men's paid and unpaid work. They can also play an integral role in supporting equitable distribution

⁵⁶ UN Fourth World Conference on Women 1995: Strategic objectives A.4 and H.3

Morocco and Algeria: Supporting time-use surveys to advance policy

UN Women's support in Morocco and Algeria in 2012 was dedicated to the conduct of national time-use surveys which involved assistance in the collection and analysis of gender-informed data on time use from 15 communities in two regions of Morocco and local communities in Algeria. In Morocco, a study on the integration of the time-use survey and unpaid work in national accounting systems is also being developed. Carried out every 10 years, these surveys are helping help to shape national public policies and plans.

of costs and benefits of such work by informing and engendering macroeconomic policy.⁵⁷

Through work on time-use surveys, it is also possible to broaden how opportunity costs are defined and measured in conventional cost-benefit analysis. Such surveys can demonstrate for example, how rural transport projects significantly reduce the time and effort women spend collecting water and fuel. However, as the economic value of the time saved is conventionally estimated as the income that women could earn during the time saved, the true benefits of the time saving are usually undervalued as women do not have many wage earning opportunities in many rural areas so the opportunity cost of their time is placed near zero. However, there are a number of economic benefits from women's increased time, such as increased school attendance (the mother now has time to take the child to school), improved health (the mother has the time to take children to the clinic) or women's role in the maintenance of water and other infrastructure

⁵⁷ Esquivel V, "Measuring unpaid care work with public policies in mind", expert paper prepared for the Expert Group Meeting on Structural and policy constraints in achieving the MDGs for women and girls, October 2013. See also "Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights", United Nations General Assembly, 68th session, A/68/293, 2013, in particular "Recommendations B. Measuring unpaid care work", <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N13/422/71/PDF/N1342271.pdf?OpenElement>.

services. All of these activities can have a computed economic value. This is an area where UN Women could potentially make an important contribution to strengthening economic analysis.

So far, most of these elements of a knowledge system have developed in parallel. However, a coordinated effort to draw them together—perhaps through the lens of the Knowledge Gateway—offers a real opportunity to meet a need expressed by the entity's stakeholders.



Finding 12: Women's access to educational opportunities (particularly vocational education and training in sectors linked to labour market demands and employment opportunities) and health are promising areas for UN Women to shape a new role as a partner to thematic sectors where it does not have a comparative advantage.

The evaluation case studies and surveys reveal strong support⁵⁸ for the contribution that education can make to WEE—especially when combined with growth in the job market. In Jordan, for example, UN Women (then UNIFEM) foresaw a rapid expansion in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector and partnered with ministries, universities and Cisco Systems to promote women's access to Cisco Certified Networking qualifications. The ICT sector in Jordan now has the highest rate of female participation in Jordan and the Arab States region. In Egypt, the FGE is supporting the Joint Salheya Initiative for Women's Economic Empowerment in Egypt to combine demand-driven technical and vocational training with online access to information on jobs, training and research opportunities: addressing some labour market failures.

⁵⁸ According to the internal evaluation results, 97 per cent of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that there is an unmet need for vocational education for women that is linked to market demands and employment opportunities.

The Jordan example has a number of external factors that promoted success: (a) a rapidly growing sector; (b) a pool of underemployed female university graduates; (c) availability of a single “gateway” qualification; (d) potential for flexible working arrangements; and (e) cultural value attached to engineering. In addition, rising costs of living put pressure on families to send more members into the labor market.

There are very few examples where such enabling conditions exist. Training cannot, therefore, be seen as a solution in isolation, and needs to be combined with job creation and other enabling conditions. Nevertheless, UN Women has recognized the potential value of education and training and has recruited a senior adviser to help shape its work in this area. How the entity chooses to engage with education and training will establish an important precedent for the future.

In relation to WEE, UN Women has no clear comparative advantage in education, including vocational education and training. The area is already crowded, and UNESCO, UNICEF and ILO have both stronger mandates and expertise. The evaluation has found increasing cooperation with UNESCO and interest and goodwill between both organizations at the highest level.

COs such as Zimbabwe emphasized that UN Women should avoid competing, or being seen to compete, with these incumbent UN entities for resources to implement education work. Rather, the entity could be better positioned by approaching education from the perspective of identifying and supporting relevant work of other entities using its comparative advantage of gender equality expertise.

For example, one area that UN Women could contribute to is advancing policies to support vocational training as a means to achieve WEE. Rather than implementation, its focus should be at the structural level—(a) identifying strategic areas for vocational training intervention, and (b) ensuring governments commit to funding of this type of activity—using a rights-based approach and knowledge of gender equality norms, as well as real constraints, that inhibit women from taking up such vocational training.

Jordan: Alignment of WEE work with emerging labour market trends

In Jordan, the partnership of UN Women with the Ministry of ICT, the Cisco Academy and Jordanian universities through the Achieving E-Quality in the ICT Sector Programme has been strategic in terms of targeting a sector of national importance, high potential for job growth, and with the prospect of flexible working conditions. The 10-year programme, which is now in its fourth and final stage, aims to increase women’s participation in the ICT sector by providing them with the ICT skills to compete with their male counterparts. The programme has included four main components, the first a technical component to support ICT students (through reimbursing their educational fees) to take the Cisco course and exam. The second phase has involved supporting job placement of graduates by linking students with the ICT market. This has been achieved through the organization of a Technology Parade and Graduate Internship Programme. The other components have consisted of research efforts (aimed at establishing a baseline to measure progress) and public awareness raising efforts within the universities.

Similarly, the participatory video and community analysis process in Moldova emphasized the impact that family health has on WEE, in terms of women’s care roles, personal ability to work and expenditure on healthcare. Evaluation survey results reveal an awareness of the centrality of sexual and reproductive health—an area in which UNFPA has comparative advantage—to women’s economic participation.

As with education, health is a crowded space, and UN Women has little value to offer as an implementing

agency. A more promising approach could be to focus on engendering joint health programmes: supporting the resource mobilization efforts of other entities, and bolstering UN Women capacity through cost recovery for technical contributions to joint programmes (an idea suggested by both a UNICEF representative and a resident coordinator).

Q5: How can the UN Women approach to WEE be enhanced to better contribute to current development priorities such as poverty reduction, the post-2015 development framework and Beijing +20 discussions?



Finding 13: Beijing +20 presents the first opportunity to follow-up on UN Women achievements in the post-2015 dialogue. This provides an important opening to help complete the mainstreaming of gender equality and women's empowerment in the SDGs.

UN Women committed its limited normative resources to engage with the Rio+20 and post-2015 processes to the greatest extent possible, achieving some important gains for WEE (see Section 3.2).

Despite these efforts, the limited availability of human resources meant UN Women was unable to follow up on all aspects of its position paper, or to build the alliances needed for mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment into all of the economic-related goals (including education). In some instances, incomplete understanding about gender equality and women's empowerment within the UN system hampered UN Women's ability to influence discussions within the Technical Support Team.

For example, UN Women's position paper identified *"ensuring sustainable water and energy access while protecting the environment"* as a critical concern for women's empowerment. Areas where WEE considerations were not mainstreamed included Goal 6 on water and sanitation (there is no mention of women's role in the water collection chain), Goal 7 on access to energy, and the goals relating to the environmental aspects of sustainable development.⁵⁹

The next important opportunity for UN Women to shape and influence global intergovernmental processes is the preparation for the 59th Session

⁵⁹ Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns, Goal 13 on climate change, Goal 14 on oceans, and Goal 15 on terrestrial ecosystems and resources.

of CSW, that will take place in 2015, of the review of progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

UN Women has been involved in the lead-up process to CSW through consultations at the country level, and at the global level, the entity has a comprehensive political and social mobilization strategy for recommitment to (and reaccelerated implementation of) Beijing commitments.

The evaluation found evidence that because UN Women has principally been concerned with its own organizational role in supporting the 59th Session of CSW, so far, the opportunity for UN Women to convene and coordinate a broader united response from the women's movement has not been fully taken.

The post-2015 process has delineated the limits of UN Women capacity to influence global processes with its current resource base. As mentioned above and further explored in Section 3.2, UN Women resources and capacities have allowed it to obtain significant results in relation to the development of a stand-alone gender goal but have limited its ability to influence, from a WEE perspective, the other economic goals. Expanding this influence requires stronger partnerships, both with the gender equality teams in other UN entities and the women's movement.

An important mechanism for UN Women in following up on opportunities and engaging in further advocacy work around the SDGs are the civil society advisory groups at the global, regional and country levels. In the view of the evaluation, Beijing+20 is a major opportunity to focus on forging that alliance and for UN Women to take a position of transformational leadership for the women's movement.

3.2 UN WOMEN'S GLOBAL EFFECTIVENESS

Q6: What is the progress towards results (normative, operational and coordination) at global, regional and national levels that UN Women, including the FGE, has contributed to so far? Are there opportunities for up-scaling good practices and innovative approaches?



NORMATIVE RESULTS

Finding 14: UN Women has contributed significantly to shaping and influencing intergovernmental policies and norms to advance WEE and has supported the development of laws and policies to advance WEE at the country level. Important work in the area of shaping the macroeconomic policy established by multilateral and regional bodies is just starting with the African Development Bank.

While no data has been reported under Outcome 2.4 of the Strategic Plan 2011-2013 DRF⁶⁰, at the global level evidence from the HQ case study, global survey and analysis of relevant normative documents contain ample evidence that UN Women has contributed to strengthening the global enabling institutional framework for WEE. This has included its direct contribution towards the further development and implementation of existing global normative standards to advance WEE in the areas of unpaid care work, decent work, and migrants, domestic workers and rural women, and by contributing to the integration of WEE in the still evolving post-2015 development agenda.

⁶⁰ Strategic Plan 2011-2013 DRF Outcome 2.4 indicators included: (a) percentage of CSW and General Assembly (Second and Third Committees) outcomes that contain action-oriented recommendations focused on women's economic empowerment; and (b) percentage of major intergovernmental outcomes (including ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Reviews, Rio+20 outcome, UNCTAD XIII, Global Forum on Migration and Development, General Assembly UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development 2013 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, etc.) that contain action-oriented recommendations focused on women's economic empowerment.

In terms of intergovernmental fora, UN Women has played an important role through its technical inputs and outreach to member states. This has included informing debates and discussions and facilitating the achievement of consensual positions among member states (in particular, on unpaid care work).

Building on wider interest in both EE and gender among the international development community, UN Women was able to influence the content of seven UN General Assembly resolutions⁶¹ related to WEE. While the 56th Session of the CSW on rural women did not result in agreed-upon outcomes, according to consulted stakeholders, UN Women's effective engagement and synergistic partnerships with other UN agencies (FAO, IFAD, WFP) contributed to putting the issue of rural women on the global intergovernmental agenda.

According to many consulted stakeholders, the most significant contribution of UN Women in terms of influencing global norms and policies from a WEE perspective concerns the role it played in the Rio +20 and post-2015 processes. The post-2015 development agenda process is still ongoing, with its final negotiated outcome (a post-2015 development agenda endorsed by heads of state/government) expected in September 2015. For this reason, several consulted stakeholders have noted that the most significant opportunity for UN Women to influence global development processes still lies ahead. However, there is

⁶¹ General Assembly resolutions, including on women in development (66/216 and 68/227, which includes a strong focus on decent work, unpaid care work and social protection); rural women (66/129, 68/139) and violence against migrant workers (66/128, 68/137); the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (General Assembly resolution 68/4), which presented recommendations on addressing the situation of women migrants.

strong evidence that UN Women has contributed to some of the building stones in the lead-up towards this final outcome.

At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012 (Rio+20), UN Women advocated for recognition of the centrality of gender equality to sustainable development. UN Women also mobilized stakeholders around this proposal, and convened the Women Leaders' Summit on the Future Women Want.

Several consulted stakeholders agree on the fact that UN Women efforts, in particular its evidence-based advocacy and stakeholder mobilization, played an important role in the Rio +20 outcome document, "*The Future We Want*," which includes a dedicated section on gender equality. The outcome document has provided a solid basis for further work on the stand-alone goal in the post-2015 agenda setting process.

The most widely recognized UN Women contribution to the post-2015 process has been to influence the proceedings of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG)⁶² of the General Assembly on SDGs and its final outcome, a proposal for 17 goals and 169 targets, which was adopted on 19 July 2014. An analysis of the OWG final proposal shows both the significant advancements in addressing WEE as part of the developing SDGs and post-2015 agenda, as well as the remaining gaps.

UN Women's voice, capabilities, and participation in influencing the post-2015 development approach was widely recognized not only by UN Women reports and staff from several parts of the entity, but also by UN Member States, other UN agencies, and CSOs. A significant number of stakeholders observed that UN Women was highly effective in advocating for a gender equality standalone goal and was moderately effective in supporting gender mainstreaming across the SDGs

62 The Open Working Group was established on 22 January 2013 by decision 67/555 of the General Assembly. It is composed of 30 members, tasked with preparing a proposal on the SDGs.

overall in its role as a member of the UN Technical Support Team to the OWG in the post-2015 process.⁶³

The OWG document includes a stand-alone goal on gender equality (Goal 5) that largely reflects UN Women's proposal, as advocated for in the Rio +20 discussions and further articulated through the position paper and the policy brief. The stand-alone goal includes substantive and implementation targets related to WEE.⁶⁴ Stakeholders widely agree that the stand-alone goal is overall a very important contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment. In particular, it is highly appreciated that one of the targets is about recognizing the role of unpaid care work in contributing to gender inequality and WEE.⁶⁵

Some challenges remain. For example, there is scope for the unpaid care work target to cover reduction and redistribution, and the issue of access to productive assets is relegated to one of the implementation targets.

UN Women was successful in contributing to the inclusion of targets in other goals that are of key importance to the achievement of gender equality, and WEE particularly. These include targets under:

Goal 1 on ending poverty (in particular on equal right to economic resources and to some extent access to productive assets)

63 In order to influence the outcome of the OWG, UN Women provided technical inputs to help inform discussions of the technical groups and OWG, including a position paper and a policy brief advocating for a stand-alone gender goal. It also successfully engaged with UN Member States in terms of outreach, advocacy and technical support.

64 Substantive target 4: recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate; Substantive target 5: ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life; implementation target a: undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources in accordance with national laws; implementation target b: enhance the use of enabling technologies, in particular ICT, to promote women's empowerment.

65 UN Women's work during the post-2015 process was widely appreciated as critical in providing evidence that unpaid care work is a key underlying factor in women's economic and social inequality.

Goal 2 on ending hunger (with one target focusing on rural women's productivity)

Goal 3 on healthy lives

Goal 4 on education (including equal access to technical, vocational and tertiary education)

Goal 8 on economic growth, employment and decent work (which includes references to equal pay and rights of women migrant workers, but little on entrepreneurship or job creation)

Goal 10 on reducing inequality (although quite vague)

Goal 17 on means of implementation and global partnership for sustainable development (although limited to disaggregated data)

At the regional level, the organization has only recently started to develop institutional normative relationships, most particularly with the African Development Bank. While there is evidence of UN Women working within the normative frameworks of regional organizations (such as the Southern African Development Community and European Union), there is no substantive evidence available to show that these have been developed with influence from UN Women.

The portfolio analysis of 27 COs showed that 70 per cent have conducted or are planning to initiate interventions to support the development of laws and policies to advance WEE. Overall, the evaluation estimates that country teams have engendered a minimum of 70 national WEE policies, strategies and laws, affecting the lives of women in at least 30 countries. This work has included technical advice and capacity development assistance to develop gender-responsive budgets. Of respondents to an internal survey, 24 per cent consider policy change as one of the most significant contributions of the entity at country level—nearly double the response of the next largest contribution (gender-responsive budgeting).

For example, in Brazil, FGE and UN Women worked with a coalition of seven women's organizations to successfully table and include 33 amendments

to the Federal Government Multi-year Plan (2012-2015). This went on to influence 15 state plans and 193 municipal plans.

Survey results and the country case studies found that policy implementation is a significant barrier to realizing WEE at the country level. Some COs have recognized the need to support implementation as a lesson learned, and examples of making implementation a specific objective of an intervention can be replicated.

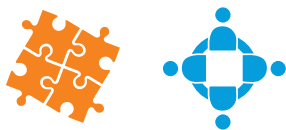
One such example is Nepal, in which there is substantive evidence to suggest that UN Women is making significant contributions to engendering the national policy environment with key ministries. The CO's role in imparting a gender equality focus in the conduct of a 2011 census to elicit information on unpaid and home-based workers (making visible such work done mainly by women), and possession of land and other assets, and in institutionalizing gender-responsive budgeting at various levels has had a significant impact on the policy environment.

Another example is in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the FGE is specifically targeting barriers to implementation of the Gender Equality Law—working in partnership to increase contextual understanding and overcome resistance at the local level.

At all levels, monitoring and reporting systems mean that it is not always clear how specific interventions have supported actual policy changes. While training of policy makers is frequently tracked, more guidance is needed from support staff members working on normative issues to review and enhance their contribution to economic laws and policies. This can include, for example, process review and recording interactions to create a historical timeline.⁶⁶

66 ODI (2014) has produced a working paper (#365) on monitoring and evaluating policy advocacy and influence, which can be downloaded from: <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8928.pdf>.

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP RESULTS



Finding 15: Coordination of UN system and wider work on WEE has been strategically focused and has established a foundation for broader (more inclusive) and deeper (more specific to WEE) coordination in the future. Achieving this will require systems-strengthening of the coordination function with UN Women and building on the prior work of others.

The coordination function, which is UN Women's newest mandate area, is an emerging area for UN Women, and represents a significant challenge in terms of having a large mandate and limited resources. The response to this at the global level has been to focus on tight boundaries for the UN coordination function (in terms of which entities are included with the scope of coordination) and to invest in broad accountability frameworks and tools (as opposed to resource-intensive facilitation).

The Coordination Division leads coordination with UN entities, and the private sector and civil society teams manage coordination outside the UN system. This approach has made the coordination function manageable and has delivered in terms of the UN SWAP.

The Strategic Plan 2011-2013 aimed to delivered a specific UN-wide coordination mechanism for WEE (under DRF Outcome 2.5.)⁶⁷ While there was some scoping of a system-wide approach to coordinating WEE, the consensus within both UN Women and the wider UNDG agencies suggest that a more appropriate approach is mainstreaming EE into existing mechanisms, including using the existing SWAP and scorecards. UN entities at both the global and country

level report experiencing “coordination fatigue”, and so are supportive of this adjusted approach.

Evidence from the HQ-level case study demonstrated that while UN Women has made significant progress in strengthening UN system-wide coordination and accountability to gender equality and women's empowerment, at a global level, there is limited evidence that the entity has contributed to strengthening UN and international coordination and accountability specifically on WEE.

The role that UN Women has played and is playing on the QCPR is part of a broader coordination mandate that will be addressed as part of the corporate evaluation on coordination. UN Women has played an important role in engendering the latest QCPR report and recommendations through the development of common positions across UN agencies. An analysis of the QCPR resolution (GA Resolution 67/226) confirms this: the resolution contains a whole section on gender equality and women's empowerment Section D, containing 10 legally binding mandates for the UN development systems (Op, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92). UN Women is also playing a role in the implementation of the recommendations of the QCPR of operational activities for development through the UNDG. This included contributing to the development of an action plan on the implementation of resolution 67/226 and participating in the inter-agency team that developed a monitoring framework in 2013.

The focus of the QCPR is on improving effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of UN operational activities for development and country-level modalities of the UN system. While strengthening gender mainstreaming and the focus and capacities for gender equality and women's empowerment programming are part of QCPR, WEE is not specifically mentioned within QCPR.

At the country level, UN Women's leverage has been framed by both its mandate and the level of support provided by the resident coordinator. While the decision to engage in coordination falls under the leadership of the country representative, in reality it

⁶⁷ No data has been reported on the second indicator for Outcome 2.5: Extent to which initiatives in the Global Migration Group Plan of Action on Empowering Women Migrant Workers integrate a gender equality and empowerment of women perspective on migration.

is also subject to the prevailing culture in the UNCT. Where there is support for joint programming, UN Women is able to pursue the coordination agenda. Where other entities are less amenable to joint programming, UN Women opportunities for coordination have been far more limited.

The extent of UN Women country-level coordination work varies across the case studies. There does appear to be a minimum level of sitting on the UNCT (including in countries where UN Women does not have a presence), but beyond this depends largely on the context of the country and the decision of the country representative in terms of where to invest time and human resources. Fifty per cent of surveyed countries use an UNDAF Gender Theme Group as the principal mechanism for coordination, and 33 per cent use another UNDAF technical working group.

The evaluation observed that UN coordination at the country level was experienced as a trade-off with the wider gender equality sector and gender equality ministry collaboration. In countries such as Jordan, where UN Women was focused on coordinating the UNCT, national governments were less aware of UN Women contributions. In two other case-study countries, the reverse was found. Overall, results of the internal survey indicate that 52 per cent of UN Women staff view the entity's work in coordinating UN agencies on WEE as a strength—despite it being cited by both internal and external stakeholders as one of the entity's primary comparative advantages.

Paradoxically, part of the challenge in further developing the coordination role is a result of having focused existing work on the UN system. While roles in relation to UN coordination are clear, separating this mandate from the broader principle of joint working has splintered responsibility for different relationships across different parts of the organization.

This evaluation is cognizant that a corporate evaluation looking specifically at coordination is expected to report in 2015. From the perspective of WEE, this evaluation finds that future work to develop

Jordan: Using system-wide coordination as a means to advance normative and operational work

UN Women in Jordan has prioritized its system-wide coordination work and used this to strategically position itself within the UNCT and leverage partnerships to advance its normative and operational work. According to the CO, 80 per cent of its work relates to coordination and it has devoted significant attention and resources to support work in this mandate area, including the establishment of a Coordination Specialist position. The CO is universally recognized among its UN peers for having successfully used coordination to exert effective influence within the UNCT through its active participation in the UNDAF Task Forces and its key role in leading the largest number of joint programmes within the UNCT (two of which have clear WEE linkages). UN Women effectiveness in supporting system-wide coordination was acknowledged in the annual report on UNDAF progress for 2013, which noted that UN Women has been the most effective UN agency in promoting joint programmes and their insights and experience should be drawn upon for other UN agencies moving forwards. UN Women has also initiated new and innovative partnerships with non-typical UN partners such as UNESCO in the area of cultural preservation.

UN Women Jordan has also used coordination as a means to advance normative work related to WEE by adopting a joint programming approach to its operational work. An example of this is the joint programme that the CO developed and is now implementing together with seven other UN agencies including UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO and UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East aimed at supporting the government and civil society in the Beijing +20 national review process. Another illustration is the joint programme that UN Women is implementing with UNFPA and UNICEF to support the Jordanian National Commission for the Status of Women to develop their sixth periodic CEDAW report.

UN Women coordination capacity should consider the following opportunities:

- a) Broaden the current focus of HQ coordination (primarily on ECOSOC and UNDG) to expand engagement with the security pillar of the UN system (through, for example, providing analysis to Members of the Security Council on the gender equality implications of proposed sanctions)⁶⁸
- b) Expand coordination work with the regional economic commissions (beyond their inclusion in SWAP) to benefit from their research capacity and relationships
- c) Clarify and communicate a common UN Women position on WEE across all coordination fora

Current efforts to strengthen coordination have relied heavily on the experience of staff members who previously served with other UN entities and the individual abilities of country representatives. The evaluation found scope for considerable institutionalization, professionalization and knowledge management of the coordination function at the country level (particularly in combination with thematic expertise) as an institutional comparative advantage.

In two of the country case studies, the evaluation found evidence of the donor funding environment hindering organizations from seeking out cooperation and joint programming in relation to WEE—leading to duplication of activities across UN agencies. While UN entities at the country level have accepted UN Women’s mandate, there remains a need to establish technical and moral leadership through the capacity development of the UN Women WEE coordination function. In doing so, however, it is essential that the entity recognizes, represents and dignifies the prior work of UNFPA, UNDP and others in this role.

⁶⁸ It is noted that UN Women and the Peacebuilding Commission have recently collaborated on highlighting the role of women as everyday peacebuilders, including through their economic role, and previously agreed a joint strategy with the Department of Political Affairs.



Finding 16: An increased number of joint programmes at the global level is supporting system-wide coordination. At the country level, UN Women is playing a greater leadership role within the UN system, in particular through UNDAF (the majority of which encompass WEE). COs require a minimum critical mass of capacity and resources in order to exert and grow effective influence.

According to data from the case studies and portfolio mapping, there are 13 joint programmes at the global level that have either been implemented or designed during the evaluation period.⁶⁹ These include programmes led by UN Women as well as those where the entity is involved as a partner agency. At the country level, there are 22 joint programmes across 19 countries including WEE specific joint programmes in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Guatemala and Jordan.

At the regional and country level, the roll out of the new regional architecture (in particular the Country Director and WEE Adviser positions) has provided an important avenue for UN Women to influence and support UNCT coordination of WEE work. The evaluation found that the status of UN Women within the UNCT has been elevated through the country representative position.

For each CO, the responsible team largely develops the approach to UN coordination, with a substantial difference being noted between countries that have a resident UN Women presence, where coordination has generally been strong, and those that are managed from regional or multi-country offices.

While the new regional architecture is helping to better position UN Women at regional and country levels to assume greater engagement and influence within the UNCT, UN Women regional and COs also require greater

⁶⁹ An assessment of the effectiveness of these programmes in contributing to coordination results is included in the HQ case-study report.

Global inter-agency work to advance normative work and standards on the economic empowerment of rural women

In advancing the economic empowerment of rural women, UN Women forged a synergistic partnership with the Rome-based agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP) that effectively built on the mandate and comparative advantage of each agency. The joint work between UN Women and these agencies started in 2011 in preparation for the 56th Session of CSW on rural women (organization of an expert group meeting). It then continued with the development of a joint position paper for the Rio +20 meeting in the post-2015 process (thematic consultations on hunger, food security and nutrition) and the development of a joint proposal for the revision of Article 14 of CEDAW, together with OHCHR. Building on this partnership, the four agencies developed a joint programme with the idea that concrete results at the country level could contribute to further strengthening normative work, and that, on the reverse side, a joint programme could strengthen the implementation of normative standards for rural women at the country level.

capacity (in terms of knowledge and adequate staffing levels) as well as resources (including programmatic) in order to enable them to have a seat at the table and effectively influence others.

In some countries, such as Moldova, the UN Women office has invested extensively in UNCT capacity strengthening in gender mainstreaming. In other countries, the WEE team is overstretched by requests for technical assistance from other UN entities. To even this out, there is some support among stakeholders for the idea of service standards that set expectations (and help monitor) UN Women technical support to UNCT members.

WEE work is largely coordinated through UNDAF gender theme groups, UNDAF working groups and national gender coordination groups. The most intensive coordination efforts have included UN Women staff members in all UNDAF thematic working groups in order to support mainstreaming, and provided

convening and facilitation of extended gender equality theme groups (including the state gender machinery and civil society). WEE is specifically included in 78 per cent of UNDAF frameworks in portfolio countries.

Analysis of portfolio data as part of the fuzzy sets analysis (see Finding 18) found that focusing efforts on interagency coordination makes the greatest contribution to UN Women effectiveness in cases where the resources available for specific WEE programming are constrained or the national context is generally less supportive of gender equality.



Finding 17: UN Women relationships with governments and women's organizations are attractive for many organizations that have resources and programming on WEE but lack connections (including the Bretton Woods institutions and the private sector). There is scope for UN Women to better understand and articulate this value proposition.

Within selected intergovernmental processes and in some countries, UN Women has expanded its efforts to provide the women's movement with a platform for participation. All parties to these processes have reported significant value from the resulting multi-stakeholder dialogue. Institutionalizing this more inclusive approach to coordination could build on UN Women strengths and address the limited awareness of UN Women WEE work the evaluation found among other actors.⁷⁰ For example, Nepal is expanding the UN gender equality coordination mechanism to be a national body co-chaired by the resident coordinator and the minister responsible for gender equality.

⁷⁰ Evidence from the case studies and global survey demonstrated that potential partners and other actors working on WEE (inside and outside the United Nations) and at global and country levels find it difficult to pin point the entity's position on WEE, including its intended results and approach. This problem has been exacerbated by the fact that UN Women's effectiveness in communicating outside the organization about what it does/plans to do and can do in relation to WEE has been somewhat limited.

At the country level, a number of UN Women offices have convened platforms and mobilized rights holders' groups to participate in political processes that have macroeconomic implications.⁷¹ These tend to be pursued under the strategic goal on political participation, rather than WEE. However, in reality, the two issues are intricately linked. Furthermore, the fuzzy sets analysis found that in cases where opportunities for women's entrepreneurship were absent, interagency coordination featured more prominently as a factor that contributed to successful programming.

The evaluation found that, among existing and potential partners, the value of working with UN Women is its comparative advantage in terms of trusted relationship with member states, networking capacity, impartiality, links to the women's movement, and growing set of connections to the private sector. UN Women appreciates the importance of this convening and facilitating role, but the evaluation found that—based on the partnerships that have been negotiated, particularly with the private sector—it has yet to fully recognize the value its networking power has for partners. For example, UN Women is able to convene a broad range of stakeholders and link to the work of the top levels of government in ways that major corporations and CSOs struggle to. While the CEOs of major corporations are received at the highest levels of government, the operational work of their organizations (including socially-orientated business) does not garner the same attention from civil servants or wider social movements as the UN system can achieve.

The newly established PSLAC and the Civil Society Advisory Groups (CSAGs) provide important convening opportunities to bring together diverse stakeholders with different views and positions. For example, at global and national levels, the CSAGs (with the inclusion of key unions and indigenous groups) could be used to create a forum for open and transparent

⁷¹ The weakest level of participation is at the regional level, which is indicative of wider crises of citizen representation within regional frameworks and bodies. While Africa, in particular, has established regional economic rights through the participation of civil society, UN Women has yet to engage with these platforms as mechanisms to advocate for structural transformation of regional economic institutions.

Bolivia: Convening and mobilizing rights holders' groups to participate in political processes with WEE implications

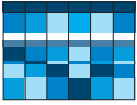
With support from UN Women FGE, the project Bolivian Women in the Process of Change: A Framework for Gender Equality Policies was implemented from 2011-2013.

The project supported diverse women's organizations to pursue a coordination framework to join a political platform to bolster the rights of Bolivian women, including indigenous, rural, urban, Afro-descendent, self-employed, domestic workers and miners in the midst of a widespread legal reform process and to work with the National Assembly to press for updates to laws to anchor women's empowerment in the new legal framework.

The project helped to facilitate consensus of 207 women from 10 indigenous, native, rural and peri-urban organizations, and affiliated institutions of 27 organizations in relation to 12 proposals for laws, including the Law on Migration, the Comprehensive Law to Guarantee Women a Life Without Violence and the Law on Sexual and Reproductive Rights.

debate around key issues and tensions that emerge in relation to private sector engagement, particularly around extractive industries, land grabbing, mining, water resources for agribusiness and in relation to protecting the terms and conditions of women workers in key sectors.

The evaluation hypothesizes, based on the evidence, that UN Women's value proposition can best be communicated to partners by emphasizing the breadth and strengths of its multi-stakeholder relationships (including with member states, civil society, unions, and the private sector). Partners are attracted not only by the entity's convening power, but also who it knows and maintains dialogue with. This is likely to enhance the entity's ability to attract partnerships and resources. Not only may such a process help to strengthen UN Women's position when negotiating future partnerships, but it may also cast light on the importance of maintaining the entity's existing relationships, even as new ones are forged.



OPERATIONAL RESULTS

Finding 18: Where data is available, many indicators in the UN Women Global DRF reveal positive trends but are unclear on causation. These need to be interpreted carefully.

A review of the available data for the UN Women Global DRF for Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan reveals that many of its intended outcomes are on track (see Table 3.2a below). From the available data that UN Women tracks, it is not possible to estimate how many women or organizations have been reached under Goal 2 (see Finding 38 on results-based management). However, the portfolio review found a (very speculative) average of 6,700 women targeted by micro-level WEE projects per country in 2011-2014 (based on data from 12 countries).⁷² The portfolio review also identified an average of two to three macro-level national policies, strategies or budgets per country that UN Women specifically sought to influence.

At the country level, extrapolation of the portfolio analysis (which included the results of global and regional programmes 2011-2014) reveals that UN Women has provided at least 112,000 people (106,000 women) with capacity development training, 80,000 people (64,000 women) with enhanced access to information and services, and approximately 3,000 women with improved access to markets through direct interventions (excluding contributions by the FGE, which included market access for more than 9,000 people in Liberia).

At the global level, the evaluation considered indicators where data was available. Outcome 2.1 of the Strategic Plan DRF 2011-2013 references the Economist's Women's Economic Opportunity Index. Review of this data found a positive change across the portfolio countries between 2010-2012 of a mean

2.0 point increase. A larger increase was identified for the same countries of +2.7 points in the Labour Policy and Practice Indicator (EIU 2012). Many factors will have contributed to these changes, implying that UN Women contribution is part of an overall positive trend.

The Strategic Plan 2011-2013 framed its intended WEE impact in relation to relevant indicators under the MDG₁ (women's access to full employment and decent work) and 3 (share of women in non-agricultural wage employment). The data here is mixed. According to the MDG Report 2014, *"In developing regions, 60 per cent of women were in vulnerable employment in 2013, compared to 54 per cent of men"*. The report also notes that *"Women's access to paid employment in non-agricultural sectors has been increasing slowly over the past two decades... with increases, although unequal, observed in almost all regions. The most impressive progress has been registered in sub-Saharan Africa, an increase of 10 percentage points over the period 1990-2012. Northern Africa, in contrast, had one of the lowest proportions of women in paid employment in 1990, and showed no noticeable increase by 2012."*

While the global data does include many positive indicators, it also needs to be considered in light of the variation between the current results framework and the entity's emerging priorities at a global level identified in Finding 1.⁷³ The current design of the DRF (largely relying on third-party outcome indicators) does not include a mechanism for aggregating the data about the numbers of lives affected by UN Women. The DRF could have included specific indicators to test whether or not the organization's assumptions regarding WEE hold true across different contexts. In light of this situation, the extent to which UN Women may have contributed to global changes in WEE is explored further in other parts of this section, including the implications of data that is not yet being tracked.

An unexpected finding of the fuzzy sets analysis was that there is very low overall alignment between UN

⁷² Note that this does not imply that interventions automatically translated into empowerment.

⁷³ The evaluation team reflected these emerging global priorities within the reconstructed and summative TOC.

Table 3.2a: Status of global DRF indicators for Goal 2

Indicator	Status	Notes
2.1 Legislation, policies and strategies to strengthen WEE and access to resources are adopted and implemented, especially for the informal sector		
Number of countries that have adopted measures to ensure women's equal access to and control over productive assets, decent work and social protection	18 control (2012) 28 social protection (2013)	On target or superseded target
Number of private sector companies that have committed to gender equality	542 (2012)	Superseded target
Number of countries that incorporate gender equality and WEE in the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the Enhanced Integrated Framework for trade-related assistance for Least Developed Countries and General Agreement on Trades in Services Mode 4	–	No data reported
Number of countries supported by UN Women that have a gender-responsive policy framework (including legislation, policies and budgets) in national, local or sectoral planning documents	15 (2012)	SP 2014-2017 Indicator
Number of countries supported by UN Women where legislators and policy makers introduce proposals for gender-responsive legislation and policies to advance WEE	16 (2013)	SP 2014-2017 Indicator
Number of countries supported by UN Women where national institutions produce nationally generated and disaggregated statistics on economic opportunities for women	12 (2013)	SP 2014-2017 Indicator
2.2 Gender-responsive infrastructure and services (transport, utilities, water, energy, etc.) enhance women's sustainable livelihoods		
Number of countries where gender-responsive infrastructure and services (transport, utilities, water, solar energy, etc.) contribute to increased productivity and income for women, including at the household level	22 (2012)	Superseded target
Number of countries that replicate models of women-friendly markets	–	No data reported
Number of eligible countries that, with World Bank and UN support, present gender-responsive proposals to IDA16 (International Development Association)	–	No data reported
Number of countries that have taken to scale gender-responsive services	20 (2013)	SP 2014-2017 Indicator
Number of countries supported by UN Women where public officials have received training and developed and/or implemented gender-responsive public services and policy	10 (2013)	SP 2014-2017 Indicator
Number of countries supported by UN Women where enterprise development assistance is accessible to women	21 (2012)	SP 2014-2017 Indicator
2.3 Gender equality advocates influence economic and labour policies and strategies to promote WEE		
Percentage of countries with economic and labour policies that are aligned with key demands from gender equality advocates	–	No data reported
Number of countries that have economic policies and poverty eradication strategies that are influenced by gender equality advocates	15 (2011)	SP 2014-2017 Indicator
Number of countries supported by UN Women where gender equality advocates and their networks campaign for specific changes in laws and policies on EE and sustainable development	19 (2012)	SP 2014-2017 Indicator
Number of countries supported by UN Women where consultations were held between government and gender equality advocates prior to the development of the current national development and/or poverty reduction strategy	9 (2013)	SP 2014-2017 Indicator

Note: SP indicates Strategic Plan

Women programming and the context indicators. This supports the finding under Section 3.1 that UN Women is tending to design programming work based on its comparative capacity to deliver, rather than the critical bottlenecks to WEE (which may require more resources than UN Women has access to).

While programme design theory suggests that this factor should reduce the effectiveness of UN Women, the fuzzy sets analysis found no correlation between alignment and effectiveness. Indeed, when the evaluation tested for factors that make UN Women work ineffective, the intermediate fuzzy sets solution identified that weak alignment of UN Women programming to the context only contributes to ineffectiveness when it is combined with three other factors: (a) low economic opportunity, (b) lack of work with the private sector, and (c) high rates of poverty.

In fact, the fuzzy sets found that once inconsistent data was removed on theoretical grounds, the following three configurations are sufficient for UN Women to be effective in 87 per cent of cases⁷⁴:

- a) Presence of resources for WEE and an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs
- b) Presence of resources for WEE, structural equality, and an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs
- c) Government capacity, women's agency, interagency coordination, structural equality, and conditions of decent work

This indicates that where resources for WEE programming are constrained, UN Women can increase the likelihood of being effective through prioritizing a combination of government capacity, greater women's agency (literacy, reproductive health, access to information), structural equality and conditions of decent work. This triangulates with the case study of Moldova, where national capacity and a focus on women's agency were

prioritized in response to having few resources and were able to capitalize on post-Soviet structural equality.

Different types of results predominated in different contexts. According to the portfolio analysis (see Volume III), knowledge generation and circulation was a more frequent result in middle income countries than elsewhere. By comparison, individual's capacities, skills and capabilities were a more frequent result in low income countries, as was the resultant enhanced accumulation and control of assets, and stronger dialogue and policy making.

Analysis by the FGE found that a "twin track" approach (combining mainstreaming with standalone gender programmes) is a hallmark of their most effective grants. While mainstreaming can address the gender-specific barriers within thematic sectors, targeted programming can better address specific determinants of gender inequality.

The work of UN Women Bolivia provides an important example of a two-pronged approach to supporting WEE. This has included specific interventions at a community level to provide women with access to finance through the SEED programme. In order to complement these efforts, UN Women played a key role in collecting and producing evidence about barriers faced by women in exercising their economic rights and the CO is now using this information to design interventions at the macro-policy level in order to support the government to further strengthen WEE.

The most successful FGE programmes were found to include two sets of actions: (a) support to access and control over resources and assets, and developing skills, capabilities and confidence; and (b) improving the enabling environment by addressing the institutions that structure and reinforce power relations in the family, community, market and state. Effective programmes were also seen by the FGE analysis to have started from the assumption that women themselves can, and will, make changes in their lives. Other specific lessons learned on programming effectiveness are identified in Section 3.5.

⁷⁴ Each of these solutions receive a high enough consistency, with the first and the third solution both receiving consistency of more than 0.84, and the intermediate solution overall demonstrating consistency is 0.759 (the cut off is 0.75). The overall coverage of these four combination is 0.87, indicating that these combined solutions explain 87 per cent of cases of effectiveness.

Fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis

A qualitative comparative analysis (a mixed quantitative/qualitative analysis of qualitative data) was undertaken using the evidence and findings of the five participatory case studies and the rapid appraisal of the Coca Cola partnership.

This analysis synthesised 191 observations from the case studies into 94 primary insights, 61 of which occurred in multiple cases. Each of these was triangulated using a secondary source of data. Using qualitative analysis and interpretation, these were clustered into 27 overall groups that constituted potential explanatory factors for the effectiveness of UN Women work in WEE.

By drawing on theory and the interpretation of connections between these factors, these factors were reduced to a list of 12 overarching variables that were then used to aggregate data from the 27 country portfolio analysis using 100 indicators analysed using fsQCA. The main sources of data were the World Bank, ILO, UNDP, UNSD, and UN Women. Several analyses were run to

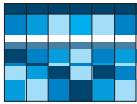
obtain solutions of sufficient coverage (similar to statistical variance) and consistency (similar to statistical significance).

FsQCA identified variables and combinations of variables that were most associated with UN Women being effective. It both challenged and confirmed evidence from other sources. This also ensured a high level of representativeness that could not be achieved through the use of qualitative methods alone.

Overall, it was confirmed that UN Women is most effective where there are conditions of structural equality, or an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs. It also found that, while resources are important, in the absence of resources a combination of other factors can lead to UN Women work being effective: government capacity, women's agency (such as literacy and access to information), interagency coordination, structural equality (recognition of gender equality in policy) and conditions of decent work.

Table: fsQCA variables and number of indicators applied to 27 countries in the portfolio analysis.

INDEX	DESCRIPTION	INDICATORS
1	UN Women effectiveness	8
2	Programming alignment to context	39
3	Decent work policies	5
4	Enabling environment for entrepreneurship	7
5	Structural gender equality (laws, opportunities)	10
6	Poverty	3
7	Levels of coordination	4
8	Work with the private sector	2
9	Women's agency (literacy, reproductive health, information)	4
10	Economic opportunities	14
11	Resources available for WEE programming	2
12	Government capacity	2
TOTAL		100



Finding 19: Micro-level enterprise activities may be helping to lift the households involved above the economic poverty line and increase women's sense of confidence. However, evidence of more holistic empowerment, including control of assets, decision-making or climbing the value chain is very limited.

UN Women internal mapping found that 20 countries specifically implement business development skills projects. A number of these countries have generated case-based monitoring of this work, providing individual examples of women who have started or grown their businesses. There is very little data available from these specific projects, however, with regard to business survival rates, rates of return on borrowing, or increases in income. The best data was from an evaluation of the Gender Support Programme in Zimbabwe, which found that the average increase in income for project participants was 34 U.S. dollars per month.

To triangulate this data, the evaluation must rely on impact evaluations undertaken of similar interventions. In Matthieu Chemin's study of

Zimbabwe: Supporting women through FGE to move up the value chain

In Zimbabwe, a group of women (Zubo) has continued to receive support from FGE. This started as a women's fishing project located in Binga, a remote area in the Matebeleland North Province of Zimbabwe. Through the Gender Support Programme, 10 women fish traders in the Siachilaba Fish Traders Cooperative in Binga made history when they began fishing for kapenta on the Zambezi River in their own specially designed fishing rig. Other women in the Binga area have been involved in a village-lending micro-finance scheme (2010-2011) and with the opening of a women's micro-finance bank in the area in 2012. Zubo is now a good practice of a group of women that have moved up the value chain, and with the support of FGE, they are now moving into fish farming and processing.

Bangladesh⁷⁵, the author found that participation in a microfinance programme led to a positive change in per-capita expenditure, significantly improved school enrolment among boys and girls. However, while it increased the amount of hours worked by men, no significant effects were found on women's non-land assets or the amount of hours worked by women.⁷⁶

De Mel, McKenzie and Woodruff⁷⁷ also found significant differences in profits and returns to capital between male and female owners who received micro-enterprise grants. Controlling for household wealth and liquidity, entrepreneurial ability and attitudes toward risk, a 100 U.S. dollars grant to male business owners was associated with an increase in profits of 8 per cent. Conversely, for female business owners, the effects were negative but insignificant. The authors find that women with greater decision-making power or in more cooperative households invest significantly higher percentages of grants in working capital and report positive returns to investment.

Aroca and Hewings⁷⁸ work on microcredit in Brazil and Chile supports the finding that microfinance impacts are positive but limited in scope. They also find individuals in bank-based programmes earned a higher income than those in NGO-based programmes. Finally, Bruhn and Zia⁷⁹ find that business training programs can have a significant impact on surviving businesses but do not seem to affect business start-up or business survival itself.⁸⁰

75 Chemin M, 'The benefits and costs of microfinance: Evidence from Bangladesh', *Journal of Development Studies*, April 2008, 44 (4): 463-484.

76 The researcher hypothesizes that men's better response to the programme might be explained by the fact that men tend to borrow higher amounts than women.

77 de Mel S, McKenzie D, Woodruff C, "Are women more credit constrained? Experimental evidence on gender and micro-enterprise returns", *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 2009, 1,(3): 1-32.

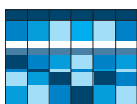
78 Aroca P, Hewings G, "Microcredit impact assessment: The Brazilian and Chilean cases", *Panorama Socioeconomico*, 2009, 27 (39): 100-112.

79 Bruhn M, Bilal Z, "Stimulating managerial capital in emerging markets: the impact of business and financial literacy for young entrepreneurs", *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, 2011, WPS5642.

80 However, they also note that business training clearly has positive effects on businesses that do survive, encouraging them to implement production processes and make investments that they otherwise would not have.

Overall, while there are good news stories from micro-enterprise projects, there is no substantive evidence supporting the hypothesis of wider WEE outcomes. This is consistent with Banerjee and Duflo's⁸¹ analysis of mandated empowerment that finds the poor become entrepreneurs not because they want to start up small businesses but because they have no viable alternatives. They argue this implies that promoting entrepreneurship may thus be an ineffective strategy for poverty reduction.

Since UN Women has determined to prioritize the realization of its universal mandate through a focus on poverty within lower-income countries, this evidence questions the effectiveness of current micro-enterprise projects. Furthermore, the approach only achieves positive outcomes where women have a pre-requisite level of financial literacy, security, and entrepreneurial mindset (as recognized in UN Women's own capturing of lessons learned). This excludes micro-enterprise projects from effectively reaching the most vulnerable women, or those who struggle to become business orientated.



Finding 20: The organization has recognized the contribution of FGE to achieving important results at the country level and is working towards greater integration. There is scope to deepen and accelerate this.

Between 2011-2014, the evaluation identified at least 44 countries supported to implement WEE related work under the FGE. Over this period, it has distributed 9.2 million U.S. dollars to 27 EE projects, with an average value of 339,444 U.S. dollars per project. In 2012 (the last grant cycle), internal monitoring documents that 24,000 women reported increased income as a result of programmes implemented by the fund. In India alone, FGE has supported 861 self-help groups

⁸¹ Banerjee A, Duflo E, "Mandated empowerment: Handing antipoverty policy back to the poor", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 2008, 1136 (1): 333-341.

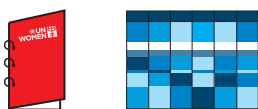
with 67,800 members and has provided training on both livelihood technologies and entitlements to 38,000 of the most marginalized women.

In Zimbabwe, FGE was observed as having integrated extremely well with the CO strategy, DRF and project activities. Grants from the FGE were used to continue support to rights-holders groups and CSOs after the closure of the Gender Support Programme. This continuity has enabled the Zimbabwe CO to sustain many of the impacts under the Gender Support Programme, in addition to continuing to strengthen an inclusive platform of women's organizations.

Overall, such integration between the FGE and other UN Women operational work is only just beginning at the global level. Originally, the FGE was created as an independent tool from UNIFEM programming. The fact that it is demand driven deliberately kept a certain level of independence from UNIFEM (and later UN Women) planning and programming, to allow for countries' needs and priorities in relation to women's empowerment to clearly emerge. However, emerging results and lessons learned from the FGE have demonstrated the potential for alignments and synergies with UN Women country programming. The evaluation finds that strengthening this integration is critical to future effectiveness. While the same concerns regarding micro-enterprise work expressed in Finding 19 also apply to the work of the FGE, it is also supporting a range of innovative WEE-related projects, including: accessing social protection, decent work, workers' rights and labour, accessing the labour market, culture and land rights, the green economy, ICT and new media, alliance building and platforms, education, and using international instruments. The FGE has also already made progress in this direction and has revised its latest call for proposals (to be released in March 2015) to give priority to interventions from civil society that demonstrate clear links to the national policy and legislation.

This existing work suggests that effective integration needs to go beyond the administrative level (such as aligning planning and monitoring frameworks), and that FGE needs to be at the centre of UN Women's future

WEE knowledge strategy. The evaluation finds that the FGE is excellently placed to support participatory action research in combination with COs—commissioning work that gives insights into how to effectively reach the most vulnerable groups, and feeding this into UN Women normative platforms.



Finding 21: At the global, regional and country level, UN Women can firmly establish its position of global leadership on WEE through its work on strengthening and making usable WEE statistics, evaluation evidence and performance monitoring.

According to UN Women internal mapping, at least 14 COs are supporting statistics and data strengthening. At the global level, UN Women is supporting the development of the EDGE indicator set with UN Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics. Where UN Women has supported the strengthening of statistical systems for WEE evidence, it has met with both success and demands for more. Poignant examples include:

- a) *The Progress of the World's Women Report*, viewed as a seminal contribution to the rights-based approach to WEE
- b) The EDGE statistics, considered by UNSD as a major contribution and driving force behind moves to consolidate and unify gender statistics
- c) Country-level time-use surveys and engendering modules of demographic and labour force surveys
- d) Support to engendering census surveys to reveal the invisible work of women

Among respondents to the UN Women internal survey, 82 per cent think that UN Women can make one of its most significant contributions to WEE through engendering national economic statistics and statistical systems. This is consistent with the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan (Output 2.1.2) intended result that

“decision makers have access to nationally-generated and disaggregated data and statistics”. Related to this, UN Women’s increased focus on advancing a decent work agenda has also highlighted that there is much work to be done in supporting countries to address data gaps relating to women’s work in the informal economy and unpaid work.

Despite the importance given to UN Women’s role and potential contribution to statistical strengthening and data in its strategic plan and by external partners and stakeholders, at the country level, the entity’s work in this area was identified by participants of the internal evaluation survey as one of the weakest areas of its expertise and capacity, although there have been some emerging good practices in Albania, Rwanda and Mexico.

UN Women in Albania, Rwanda and Mexico: Advancing gender statistics

In Rwanda, UN Women along with other UN agencies provided support to the National Statistics Institute in producing and disseminating sex-disaggregated data. As a result, gender statistics have been integrated into the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda strategic plan for 2012-2015.

UN Women **in Albania** contributed to advancements in gender statistics including efforts to amend the Law on Official Statistics (in collaboration with UNFPA), which has since made the collection and provision of sex-disaggregated data mandatory. Support has also been provided to the National Institute of Statistics to successfully mainstream gender into its statistical policy framework and five-year statistical programme for 2012-2016.

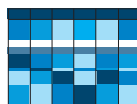
In Mexico, gender statistics is a clear niche for UN Women, and strong partnerships have been forged between UN Women, NGOs and the European Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean through providing technical assistance to NGOs, facilitating South-South cooperation and organizing exchange forums, such as the International Time-Use Expert Meeting and the International Gender Statistics Meeting carried out annually in Mexico during the last decade.

At the HQ level, UN Women has statistical experience, particularly through its work with UNSD on the EDGE initiative that can be built upon. Lessons learned from the country level, and included within strategic notes, include focusing on the interpretation and usability of existing data, as well as generating new data. Moreover, UN Women is in the position to make the case and advocate for expansion of gender disaggregated data in UN agencies, World Bank, ILO and national governments. UN Women can shape the agenda by interpreting and presenting easy-to-use evidence to policy makers. Other lessons included linking statistical strengthening to efforts to enhance monitoring systems in line ministries.

In addition to highlighting the value of statistical support, country case studies also identified monitoring and evaluation as significant opportunities for UN Women to contribute to shaping the agenda. The UN system in many countries is looking for leadership and capacity support to human rights-based and gender-responsive evaluation.

In partnership with entities such as UNICEF, UN Women has the opportunity to position itself at the centre of how evaluative knowledge is generated by national governments and UNCTs. Supporting national GRB monitoring approaches piloted by UNICEF—such as Social Intelligence Reporting—are also an opportunity to forge an alliance to support evidence-based policy making on WEE.

Maximizing UN Women relevance in relation to statistics requires linking its country-level, regional and global initiatives. For this reason, further corporate guidance and support is needed. Linkages with the global work being done through the EDGE initiative could provide an important opportunity to inform and advance regional and country-level efforts, while a more systemic approach to aggregating country data at the regional and global level will support UN Women normative work. Ideally, with some adaptations to the Knowledge Gateway, UN Women already has the platform to share these insights with the WEE community.



Finding 22: There are real opportunities for UN Women to enhance its position on risk and resilience-based programming

UN Women is programming within a context of global economic uncertainty (see contribution analysis in Finding 26 for more detail). So far, work on mitigating risk and enhancing the resilience of individuals, households, communities and economies has been limited.

At the global level, UN Women has commissioned and published research on the gender implications of policy responses to the global economic crisis. Moving forward, there is scope to build on this work and to include options for engendering national and international resilience mechanisms (including financial regulation) in programming guidance.

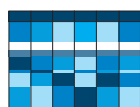
A number of countries have developed experience in building the resilience and improving the work conditions of women in the informal sector (e.g., organizing women into cooperatives). In some countries, there is limited space and potential to move women from the informal sector, and the global survey emphasized the importance of programming for both sectors.

The country case studies and the internal survey found very strong evidence to support the notion that ethical approaches to micro-credit and entrepreneurial-promotion need to include safety mechanisms to protect vulnerable women. The evaluation, however, found no examples of programmes that currently do this—with risk calculated in terms of the risk to lender, rather than the risk to borrower. There is a strong moral and economic case for UN Women to withhold from any micro-level programme that does not include mechanisms for reducing or sharing the risks of entrepreneurship (such as loan guarantees, family support grants and business insurance).

At the country level, some work has been undertaken in relation to programming for uncertain security conditions (for example, Afghanistan and Egypt). At the global level, however, the evaluation finds that there is greater scope for considering insecurity in the conceptual model for WEE programming (especially in fragile states and rapidly changing regional conditions such as around the South China Sea).

At the global level, UN Women has identified climate change adaptation and mitigation as an emerging priority. There is a strong case to support this, especially considering the similar role of the global economic system in driving consumption-based anthropogenic climate change and entrenching the disempowerment of women. Better connecting these issues at the operational level could create a powerful narrative for UN Women and build off its normative contribution to Rio +20.

Q7: To what extent are norms for WEE used and informing UN Women operational work and to what extent does UN Women operational experience inform work on norms and standards in this area?



Finding 23: UN Women has been effective in communicating normative developments to the field and sharing relevant information. Further support is needed to enable COs to translate the significant normative advances made in the area of WEE into legislative and policy change at the national level.

Evidence from the case studies and review of documentation demonstrates a regular flow of information from HQ to country and regional offices about normative developments. During the country-level case studies, UN Women staff manifested knowledge and awareness about intergovernmental and normative work at the global level, particularly related to the entity's work and achievements around the post-2015 process.

UN Women also benefits from having passionate staff members who are gender equality experts, many of whom actively stayed up to date with changes at the normative level.

While the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan (under Output 2.11) has the intended result of *“increased capacity of legislators and policy makers in applying international standards”*, a review of CO strategic notes and annual

work plans and programme documents indicated that operational work is not fully linked to supporting implementation of relevant standards and norms

FGE: Supporting linkages between UN Women operational and normative work on WEE

Through the FGE, UN Women, through its operational work has been able to support normative advances in ensuring decent work and social protection for women in the Latin America and Caribbean region since 2011. An example of this has been the regional, multi-country programme Constructive a Labour Rights Agenda for Women Working in Homes and Sewing Workshops in the Southern Cone, which has focused on supporting vulnerable women working in informal and unrecognized sectors in Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Paraguay and is co-led by the implementing partners Fundación Fondo de Mujeres del Sur (FMS) and Fondo Alquimia. The programme has provided an important platform to push for the national-level ratification of ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers in Argentina, and ratification by the Chilean government is now expected in 2014 or 2015. Programme partners in Argentina and Paraguay also advanced new national-level regulations on domestic work and helped to create a Textile Workers National Coordinating Network in Chile and a National Textile Cooperatives Network in Argentina.

related to WEE (see Finding 35 for more detail). There is scope for the design of regional and country strategies and programmes to be clearer in showing how planned interventions will support governments in implementing international WEE-related standards.

Evidence from the case studies also shows that areas where key normative gains have been made in relation to WEE through the post-2015 process (including related to decent work and unpaid care work) have not yet been prioritized with operational work. To some extent, this is related to the programme cycle.

However, in addition to information about global normative work, regional offices and COs would also benefit from clear technical advice and guidance to help them advance emerging issues at a country level.

The evaluation notes that some of this work is already underway. Important initiatives to support and inform future programming and establish clear linkages between operational and normative work will be the upcoming “Progress of the world’s women report 2015: The world survey on women in development”.

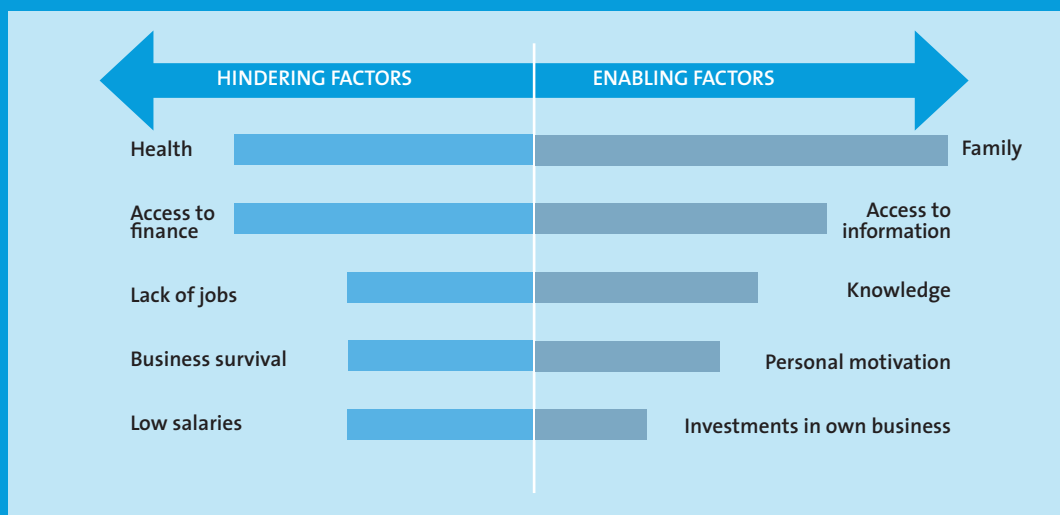
Participatory video and analysis

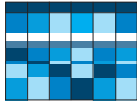
As part of the commitment to gender-responsive evaluation, the IEO and ImpactReady worked with InsightShare to pilot the use of participatory video in thematic evaluation. During this process, six women users of joint information and service bureaus in Moldova were trained in the technique of participatory video monitoring and evaluation.

The process included collecting 54 stories of most significant change and filtering these into six final videos. This was followed by a participatory analysis, led by the women themselves, to identify enabling and hindering factors for women’s economic empowerment—including how UN Women support to the bureaus had influenced these.

The videos were screened and discussed at both the local level and the national level. Stakeholders were highly appreciative of the inspirational nature of the stories and the representation of the women involved as agents of positive change in their families and communities.

The process also highlighted insights that other techniques were unable to highlight. This included the importance that women placed on the role of their family members as enablers of WEE, and the importance that health plays (both their own and the health of their family members) in affecting opportunities for economic activities.





Finding 24: UN Women has recognized the need to aggregate and share knowledge gained from operational experience with its normative function. So far, attempts to achieve this have been ad hoc. There is a need for UN Women to systematically gather evidence on WEE (including from sister entities), analyse this, and “push” relevant information to its other business functions (including intergovernmental).

At the global level, UN Women has demonstrated some success in harvesting experience from its operational experience and using it to influence its normative work. For example, UN Women developed three Secretary-General reports to feed into the discussions of the 56th Session of CSW: one on WEE and two specific to rural women.⁸²

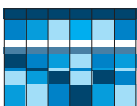
UN Women also developed Secretary-General reports for the 66th and 68th sessions of the General Assembly on women and development, rural women and violence

against migrant workers. These reports incorporated examples provided by Member States and UN agencies and experiences from UN Women work at the field level.

The country-level case studies found that COs are struggling with the challenging task of systematically assessing data from project work, interpreting and presenting this evidence, and elevating this to normative work. The CORT process also revealed the importance of UN Women enhancing the effectiveness of its normative mandate by drawing on relevant evidence and experience from sister agencies (such as ILO, UNESCO, UNDP, FAO, IFAD and WFP) and including this within its analytical work.

Overall, the evaluation has found that lessons and evidence exist throughout the organization and its partners. What is missing, currently, is a clearinghouse mechanism that aggregates, assures, synthesizes and distributes this knowledge. A number of stakeholders have identified the regional offices as being the appropriate level for such a function. Wherever the function sits, however, it could be an important step forward in terms of effectiveness

Q8: What are enabling and limiting factors that contribute to the achievement of results and what actions need to be taken to overcome any barriers that limit the progress?



Finding 25: The global and national economic context has a significant effect on UN Women work in WEE and the extent to which it can contribute to achieve higher-level results.

The technique of contribution analysis involves consideration of alternative explanations for observed changes. Throughout the evaluation process, six external factors were identified that were considered likely to have contributed to higher-level changes in WEE and influenced UN Women programming and results in this area:

Following the global economic crisis of 2008-2009, in 2014 IMF identified a global crisis created by the prolonged period of keeping interest rates close to or at zero. Rather than stimulating economic risk taking (implying the creation of jobs), the IMF posits that instead, there has been an in financial speculation. The consequence of this is continued instability

⁸² Secretary-General report on economic empowerment of women, November 2011 (E/CN.6/2012/10); Secretary-General report on the empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges, December 2011 (E/CN.6/2012/3); Secretary-General report on the empowerment of rural women: the role of gender-responsive governance and institutions, December 2011 (E/CN.6/2012/4).

combined with continued constraints in the global supply of jobs, both of which negatively affect women and work against UN Women normative and macro-economic work.

Simultaneously, IMF and World Bank, among others, have identified increasing levels of global inequality as the return on work commands a lower value than the return on capital, concentrating wealth far beyond the primary accumulation required for industrialization (and, again, affecting women more than men due to women's lower rates of ownership and control).

Partly due to the trends described above, several country case studies also identified a cost-of-living crisis sparked by globalization, creating an incentive for families to relax cultural norms that restrict women's productive work and placing higher social value on women with an income.

Within the Western world, there has been an emerging revival of the feminist movement, with repercussions on the attention given to gender equality and women's empowerment within the economic programmes of donors and IFIs.

In parallel, there has been a resurgence in religious conservatism in the face of economic and governance crises.⁸³

In addition, there have been a number of complex emergencies, humanitarian and health crises, such as Ebola, Syria and Northern Nigeria.

As experienced to an extreme extent by the Zimbabwe, Egypt and Palestine COs, macroeconomic instability has made both ex-ante programming and ex-post process-tracing extremely challenging. At the global level, it is considered highly likely that the six factors identified above, in addition to overall economic growth, will have had significant effects on the results data included in the Strategic Plan DRF. UN Women's contribution is better seen, therefore, through a systemic lens—whether it is contributing to creating an enabling environment for WEE at the country, regional and global levels.

83 World Economic Forum, 2013.



Finding 26: UN Women's resourcing narrative is creating incentive for it to "do" (and to fundraise by "doing"). This has several negative effects, including unnecessarily positioning the organization in competition with the wider gender-equality sector.

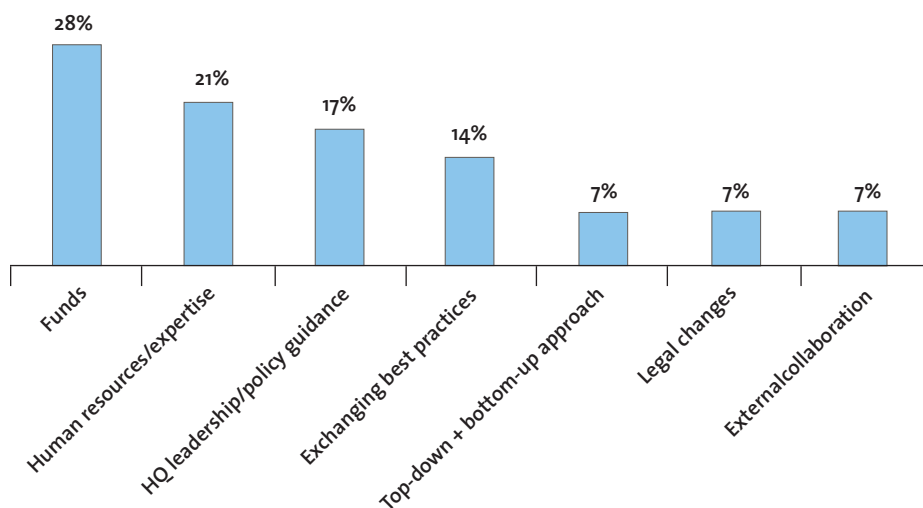
The evaluation found an almost universal narrative of structural underfunding permeating the organization. It is a central tenet of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017, it came up in most evaluation interviews, it is one of three main reasons for convening the PSLAC, it dominated responses to the internal and global surveys, and both corporate thematic evaluations prior to this identified funding as a major contributing factor to effectiveness.

Overall, the evidence of this evaluation supports the proposition that resources (specifically, financial resources) are important for effectiveness. The results of fsQCA of 27 COs most clearly identified resources (measured in terms of budget) as a necessary condition for effectiveness (measured in terms of policy contributions, national outcome indicators and presence of effectiveness-supporting practices). This differs from the individual case studies, which could have suggested that UN Women could position itself to be effective through policy influence regardless of resource availability.

However, the finding of this evaluation differs from previous findings in other respects. The main challenge that this evaluation sees is not the level of resourcing, per se, but the narrative surrounding it. For instance, while the argument that the organization needs more resources to be more effective is technically correct, given the structural realities that are faced, it does provide a narrative that differentiates UN Women to potential donors from other non-profit-making organizations.

The current narrative has also created the incentive for UN Women to "do" (i.e., to implement more and to mobilize resources and recognition by doing so).

Figure 3.2a: Coded responses to the question “What would make the biggest difference to your work on WEE?” in a survey of 28 UN Women COs



This finding was confirmed in the external survey responses and during focus group discussions with CSOs during the country case studies.

This incentive towards implementation carries a number of significant risks. For instance, within the UN system, there is appreciation of UN Women’s mandate and technical potential, but caution in terms of the implications it is having for funding to agencies’ own gender equality and women’s empowerment programmes. If there is a perception—true or not—that UN Women places itself first-in-line for new gender equality resources, then the coordination function becomes even more challenging.⁸⁴

There are also internal risks. As a knowledge-based organization, UN Women’s core product is cognitive. The most recent management research, however, identifies a strongly negative link between creativity and financial incentives. Focusing the organization on the urgency of fundraising is likely to be constraining

84 Another example is the response of the Trade Unions to the PSLAC. There is little doubt that engaging with the private sector is both necessary and timely for UN Women—but the failure to carry the traditional base of the organization along with that strategy risks creating long-term disengagement of the very organizations that can give UN Women the greatest reach into the lives of its target groups.

the effectiveness of staff members in producing the very value that UN Women needs to both achieve its objectives and attract future investment.

The counter narrative to the current trend is to focus on maximizing the potential of the current financial base and allowing the organization to place the interests of the wider WEE movement at the centre of its work. Shifting emphasis in this would enable UN Women to focus on representing the strengths and achievements of those who “do”, building the case for increasing the overall size of funding to the gender equality sector (including WEE) and directing these resources to the organizations that can best use them.

External evaluation survey respondents validated this approach, suggesting that UN Women should avoid taking the lead in everything and focus its efforts on supporting existing CSOs, institutions and relevant programmes. In the long run, this role as an advocate and a broker is more likely to place UN Women in a trusted position with the women’s movement, extend its reach (and impact), and—eventually—become a major channel for distributing resources to the sector.



Finding 27: In light of resource constraints, UN Women work at the policy and normative level has enabled UN Women to achieve significant results with limited resources. This approach offers potential for scaling.

While financial and human resource constraints have dominated the internal narrative regarding effectiveness, many parts of the entity are finding innovative and creative ways to be effective with the limited resources they have. For example, while the Joint Global Programme on Rural Women has remained almost entirely unfunded for two years, at least one of the pilot COs, Nepal, took advantage of the programme design process to facilitate the creation of an entirely new and engendered national agricultural development strategy.

While financial and human resource constraints have dominated the internal narrative regarding effectiveness, many parts of the entity are finding innovative and creative ways to be effective with the limited resources they have. For example, while the Joint Global Programme on Rural Women has remained almost entirely unfunded for two years, at least one of the pilot COs, Nepal, took advantage of the commitment to the programme (which had been discussed extensively with the Government of Nepal and other stakeholders) to contribute to the formulation of the government's 20-year agriculture development strategy, which is committed to the inclusion of women, disadvantaged groups and geographically disadvantaged populations throughout the planning, implementation and monitoring of the strategy. The design of the Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Joint Programme is aligned with the agriculture development strategy and the joint programme is seen by the Government of Nepal as a potential pilot intervention of the agriculture development strategy. The agriculture development strategy includes a 10-year plan of action, which commits to the development of a gender equality and social inclusion strategy, the development of which UN Women has committed

to supporting. Thirteen development partners⁸⁵ supported the development of the agriculture development strategy.

Other country-level examples include UN Women efforts to mobilize UNCT actors to support Beijing +20 and reporting on CEDAW through joint programming, which brought additional resources to these efforts. An example of this is the joint programme that UN Women in Jordan developed and is now implementing together with seven other UN agencies (including UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) to support the government and civil society in the Beijing +20 national review process.

In terms of working with limited human resource capacities, although UN Women's knowledge and expertise on gender equality and women's empowerment are broadly acknowledged, the number of specific WEE experts in macroeconomics, private sector development and sustainable development has been and remains limited.

In order to address these capacity gaps within the EE Section, the GRB team has provided some budgetary support to the country-level work. A number of countries have convened civil society advisory groups that include experts in human rights and feminist economics.⁸⁶ Establishing a central roster of normative experts would also be an asset, both internally for the COs and to the wider UN system.

The heritage of UN Women in the women's movement is an enormous asset for both parties. Much of UN Women's brand value—its credibility and good will—comes from the feminist and human rights movements, as well as the moral and technical authority of the United Nations. Currently, the evaluation evidence suggests that the effort to

⁸⁵ These included the Asian Development Bank, European Union, SDC, JICA, USAID, DANIDA, World Bank, DfID, AusAID, and the four UN partners of the Rural Women's Economic Empowerment Joint Programme, FAO, IFAD, WFP and UN Women.

⁸⁶ Other advisory groups are primarily grass-roots activists with little experience in macroeconomic policies.

operationalize UN Women as a functional entity is driving it to focus on its own structural needs and less so on the global movement that helped to advocate for its creation. As a stand-alone entity, however, UN Women is limited in its capacity.

A different perspective of UN Women, of a representative for other parts of the women's movement, implies that it could act on a scale far greater than if it were to work through its staff alone. The argument that "*UN Women does not have to do everything*" is well recognized within the entity, but it is primarily being applied to engaging with the private sector.

By comparison, civil society is recognized, included and consulted by UN Women, but there is little evidence that it is being mobilized behind clear goals and strategies for a global campaign of advocacy and action by the women's movement towards EE, and social, economic and cultural rights. For example, the planning for Beijing +20 events is seen by stakeholders to have been primarily concerned with UN Women's response, rather than UN Women leading a common plan (such as a joint gathering in Beijing). Identifying and building on some of the strategic innovation that is already taking place within UN Women could enable it to lead such a movement.

Q9: To what extent has the UN Women approach for engaging with key partners (UN system, World Bank, CSOs, foundations and the private sector) been effective?



Finding 28: WEE is a broad and cross-cutting area that has contributed to an increased number of partnerships and collaboration between UN Women and other UN agencies and external partners.

Many UN agencies and international organizations cover, as part of their mandates, different aspects of WEE, including economic policy, trade, finance, entrepreneurship, agriculture and rural development, food security, migrations, labour rights, social protection, education and vocational training, sustainable development and climate change adaptation. There are various examples showing that UN Women has made efforts to complement the work of other international actors on WEE, in particular through joint programmes, joint advocacy and mobilization related to global normative and policy-making processes.

Work on WEE has also enabled UN Women to initiate new partnerships in areas where it has never worked before such as in cultural preservation (in collaboration with UNESCO in Jordan) as a means to promote WEE.

Until very recently, UN Women has not systematically assessed the work of UN agencies and other international key actors on WEE, nor has it analysed its own comparative strengths and weaknesses in order to re-assess and re-adjust its own areas of interventions.⁸⁷ Decisions to engage in certain areas of work, programmes, initiatives or partnerships were often personalized (dependent on the individuals involved and their networks) and opportunistic, rather than institutional and strategic.

The fact that the internal process currently underway in UN Women to further define its vision and approach to WEE includes various rounds of consultations with external stakeholders is promising and will help to ensure that its future interventions on WEE take into account how they will complement and add value to the work of other organizations.

There is still a sense that the potential for partnering with World Bank and other IFIs on WEE has not

⁸⁷ Some interviewed UN Women HQ staff mentioned that in the past, a mapping of what other UN agencies were doing on WEE was developed. However, several other staff members were unaware of this mapping and there is no evidence that it was systematically used to inform planning on WEE.

been fully explored and understood by both parties. Regarding cooperation with World Bank, while there is increasing interest in this direction and there are examples of small scale, somewhat isolated joint initiatives (Finance Ministers Community of Practice, EDGE, Joint Programme on Gender-Sensitive Macroeconomic Policy), there is still not a well-defined framework for collaboration, integrating a shared understanding of each partner's potential added value to the advancement of WEE.

The development of a shared understanding with World Bank is hampered by several factors, including the large difference in size and resources between the two organizations, the different theoretical approaches to WEE (see Finding 3), and the fact that UN Women is still in the process of defining its vision for WEE.



Finding 29: UN Women attempts to engage the private sector are necessary, timely and have the potential to be pioneering for the United Nations in advancing WEE. Ensuring their strategic and operational effectiveness demands greater shared ownership of objectives, conceptual clarity on modalities of engagement and sensitive positioning regarding resource-mobilization.

Engagement with the private sector provides a critical entry point for UN Women to advance WEE given the immense influence of private sector actors as drivers of economies, consumption and job creation, which inevitably translates into political influence in most economies. While there are important opportunities to engage the private sector as a partner in advancing WEE, at the global level, UN Women has tended to regard and engage with the private sector primarily as donors.

Evidence from the case studies and surveys shows that ideological divergences exist inside the organization on the appropriateness of UN Women partnerships with the private sector and about its ideal boundaries.

While many parts of the organization see the private sector as an essential partner in promoting WEE worldwide, significant internal tensions exist on the type of approach that should be put forward by UN Women when partnering with the private sector (an HRBA or a rather instrumentalist approach).

There is significantly greater appetite for engaging with the private sector at the CO level than within HQ. There is also greater experience in terms of learning how to work together through joint action. Most partnerships with the private sector have tended not to include direct funding of UN Women activities.

For example, a number of countries are experimenting with a Gender Equality Seal (GES) for companies. The evaluation found this to be an innovative and forward-looking approach. In its application, however, the evaluation also observed that significant additional marketing work is required in order to generate brand awareness, understanding and commercial value in holding the seal. For the time being, it is likely to continue to be used by companies wishing to identify their existing values, rather than persuading companies to consider gender equality for the first time.

At the global level, the WEPs gain exposure through their association with the Global Compact. As of October 2014, 814 company CEOs have signed the WEP statement. Many of these are major corporations representing thousands of employees.

Fiji: Using private sector partnerships to facilitate women's access to credit

In an effort to build the capacity of women market vendors at the Honiara Central Market, UN Women facilitated a partnership between Bank South Pacific and Honiara City Council. In August 2013, rather than requiring vendors to come into the branch, UN Women negotiated for the bank to take its services to the market. The council then facilitated the issuing of papers that allowed the bank to waive identification and other requirements. This partnership led to more than 150 market vendors opening bank accounts.

The WEPs, and innovations such as the GES, are important attempts to learn more about incentivizing new social and cultural norms with corporations. In global terms, these efforts remain limited in scope, and unevenly distributed (for example, the average number of companies to sign the WEPs in countries in the portfolio review was 3.25).

They are also acknowledged to be incomplete. For example, the WEPs have no monitoring or accountability mechanism. As learning platforms and means to engage in dialogue with the private sector, however, both the WEPs and GES already have proven potential to be effective. Scaling this work, however, will require stronger integration of the WEPs into the policy work of the EE Section.

Unlike work such as the WEPs, UN Women's partnership with The Coca-Cola Company, and more recently the launch of the PSLAC, has a more direct link to resource mobilization. Both have sparked a diversity of reactions, both within UN Women and among its partners.

According to the internal evaluation survey, UN Women respondents were completely divided when asked whether or not UN Women should strengthen its engagement with the private sector. Some of these reactions concern the substance and merit of UN Women's engagement with the private sector, while others are related to the process and modalities used.

These tensions are also reflected in what is understood by stakeholders as the main purpose of these relationships: resource mobilization, influencing private sector internal practices in favour of WEE and women's rights, and working together to improve WEE worldwide. Consulted stakeholders have raised some potential or existing contradictions in pursuing these different purposes for private sector engagement at the same time, e.g., raising money from one company, while at the same time trying to improve its record for WEE.

One of the main concerns is that, given UN Women's funding gap, the entity might be tempted to prioritize the resource mobilization purpose over other

considerations. Senior management is confident that safety mechanisms have been put in place to prevent this. However, perception can also be as important as reality.

A significant number of consulted stakeholders within UN Women felt that the organization's interest in engaging with the private sector has shifted from trying to influence private sector practices from a corporate responsibility and human rights perspective (e.g., through the WEPs initiative), to engaging with companies for resource mobilization purposes, thus undermining UN Women's ability to achieve WEE goals.

Relationships with the private sector have also drawn criticism from some of UN Women's traditional partners (e.g., CSOs and trade unions), who see this approach at odds with the promotion of women's rights in the workplace. For example, there were perceived contradictions between engagement with the private sector and UN Women work conducted with the ILO on decent work. According to some consulted stakeholders, the lack of clarity on UN Women's position towards the private sector is also jeopardizing its reputation and credibility with other key WEE actors (e.g. ILO, unions, women's groups), and it is putting its advocacy role for women's rights at stake.

Despite these concerns, the partnership with The Coca-Cola Company was found by the evaluation to have made, or have the potential to make, important contributions to UN Women effectiveness. Beyond the direct support to women in the Coca-Cola value chain, national government interviewees indicated the credibility that UN Women gains by demonstrating its ability to bring on board major industrial players. For this reason, at the country level, the partnership has given UN Women a stronger position at the policy table. At the international level, the partnership has supported UN Women access to global business leaders.

Nevertheless, it remains clearly evident from the document review and the semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders that UN Women lacks a clear and common internal position on its engagement

with the private sector. The staff members of the organization are not as close to the position of the leadership as is assumed and the efforts to reconcile internal differences have been insufficient.

While the PSLAC is seen by the leadership as a pilot for future work, and a continuation of previous policy, the communication of this perspective has not yet fully resonated throughout the organization. Updating the 2011 private sector strategy to include objectives other than resource mobilization would likely be an important step towards addressing this. Another suggestion was to “firewall” substantive work from resource mobilization by shifting leadership on the WEPS and other accountability mechanisms to the EE Section.

Learning from this experience, there is also an opportunity for the entity to establish a strong mechanism for

open internal discussion on issues such as UN Women engagement with the private sector, in order to identify a clear set of values to guide and inform its approach.



Finding 30: UN Women’s civil society links and roots in the women’s movement are significant assets in establishing legitimacy of representation of excluded groups in global and national normative processes and economic policy discussions.

UN Women has contributed to strengthening the influence of gender equality advocates and women’s representatives on intergovernmental normative

Mexico, Egypt and Jordan: A rights-based approach to private sector engagement

In July 2012, UN Women Egypt partnered with Social Accountability International to develop the GES as a new auditable standard and certification system. The GES aims to promote fair treatment of men and women in the workplace and supply chain by providing companies with a clear roadmap to measure and improve their capacity and demonstrate their progress in implementing gender equity policies.

The GES certification system, which has as its foundations the relevant ILO conventions and international human rights instruments, has enabled UN Women to apply a rights-based approach to its private sector engagement. The GES certification system includes criteria on equal pay and equal treatment in relation to recruitment, employment and termination of contracts as well as provision of a safe working environment with an effective sexual harassment policy and flexible, non-discriminatory work

practices. The GES certification system is listed as a tool on the Women’s Empowerment Principles and proved to be an effective entry point for work with the private sector and an example of how such partnerships can be used to advance WEE.

After developing the GES in Mexico and piloting it in Egypt, UN Women in Jordan has also introduced the GES, making it the third country in the world to have this type of certification scheme. Given the limited culture of social corporate responsibility in Jordan, this initiative has been widely regarded as pioneering. The nine private companies in Jordan that have received the GES certification are from the fields of hospitality and ICT. While these have been booming sectors in Jordan, Jordanian women have until recently constituted only 10 per cent of the total workers in the sector. For this reason, the GES in Jordan has been highly relevant and aligned with emerging labour market opportunities and has enabled UN Women to develop effective private sector partnerships that are contributing towards greater economic empowerment of women.

processes and global policy-making processes. According to UN Women reports, and to some extent, to CSOs representative's views, the entity has played an important role in supporting increased visibility and participation of women's NGOs in global inter-governmental processes, including in Rio +20 and discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

This contribution was achieved through financial support to women's groups to facilitate their participation in these events and by convening multi-stakeholder meetings and consultations on the side of key events. UN Women also facilitated access and dialogue opportunities between CSOs and Member States. As a resource-intensive area, this work has particular scope for strategic alliances with organizations such as the Global Fund for Women and the Association for Women's Rights in Development.

While there have been clear examples of UN Women cooperation with civil society at a global level and in a number of countries, at the country level there is scope for increasing women's participation in economic policy discussions (especially using Beijing +20 and post-2015 as important convening/advocacy opportunities).

In Zimbabwe, UN Women has helped to give visibility to women cross-border traders. Informal and cross-border trade have been attributed with providing significant economic resilience to macroeconomic instability in Zimbabwe, at both the household and national level. The Gender Support Programme in Zimbabwe has created a platform for more than 200 women informal cross-border traders to engage in consultations with government officials to advocate for the inclusion of their concerns in economic policies and trade agreements and to participate in regional markets.

The newly established CSAGs provide an important avenue for UN Women to convene key civil society actors around the issue of WEE and to raise awareness about the entity's role and work in this area. In this regard, it will be important that the composition of CSAGs also include civil society actors with expertise and knowledge related to women's economic rights and empowerments. Already, a number of countries have convened CSAGs that include feminist economists, which has added considerable value to the work of those COs.

3.3 INTEGRATION OF A GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

Q10: To what extent have WEE activities undertaken by UN Women addressed the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination?



Finding 31: At the global level, there has been increased attention to understanding and unpacking the underlying causes of disempowerment, inequalities and discrimination and to understanding how UN Women can contribute to redressing them. Greater efforts are now needed to address the major structural causes of inequality through the entity's operational work at the country level.

Overall, there is strong evidence that the majority meta of UN Women global interventions on WEE—both in their design and implementation—are addressing underlying causes of women's inequality and discrimination. This is accomplished in particular through the entity's normative work and related technical inputs on rural women, unpaid care work and decent work, including as part of the post-2015 process and the design of joint programmes on these same issues.

When developing its Strategic Plan 2014-2017, UN Women made a conscious effort to target its future work on poor and excluded women and updated Strategic Goal 2 to reflect this new focus.⁸⁸ The portfolio review and mapping of UN COs also provides evidence that UN Women has focused most of its WEE-related global work on poor and vulnerable women, including rural women, migrant women, and domestic workers.

The majority of countries (86 per cent) rely on geographic targeting (i.e., of poor areas) and the reach of grass-roots organizations (79 per cent) to ensure

⁸⁸ Goal 2 in the UN Women 2014-2017 Strategic Plan was changed to "Women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development."

that UN Women interventions reach the intended clients. Participatory (25 per cent) or conditional targeting (29 per cent) approaches are far more infrequent. This suggests that UN Women is highly reliant on broad-based approaches to supporting women, with few guaranteed mechanisms in place to ensure that it is the most vulnerable (or other intended groups) that are benefitting. Poor and marginalized women in high-income countries are only included under UN Women normative work

During the case studies and in the survey responses, a number of stakeholders highlighted that because WEE is a broad area, UN Women needs to be more focused and strategic in addressing structural causes of discrimination and inequality, rather than addressing micro-level constraints to inequality. Results from the internal survey show that 61 per cent of UN Women respondents felt that the entity

World Economic Forum is a prime example of developing an influential brand that carries weight and influence through its role as a convenor and broker of relationships. Because of this, World Economic Forum research is able to leverage significant influence, even though the organization does not implement programmes directly.

was either very good or good at ensuring that its WEE activities are addressing root causes of inequality and discrimination for the most vulnerable groups of women. However, 29 per cent of staff indicated that the entity is very weak in this area.

UN Women operational work to support increased income of women at the community level has been

relevant in targeting vulnerable, marginalized and poor women in rural areas. These interventions have also enabled UN Women to better understand the root and underlying causes of discrimination, inequality and poverty as well as how multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination can compound barriers to the realization of women's economic rights. However, programme responses that are based on women's own agency as the primary vector of empowerment are generally limited in what they can achieve (in terms of income-based empowerment) and who can achieve it (women with entrepreneurial mind-set and some capital base).

UN Women interventions to advance WEE are also not sufficiently addressing the training gap or gender bias of the labour market and a missing emphasis has been on the overall goal of job creation, which not only benefits women but also reduces gender conflict by reducing job competition between women and men. This latter area is a fertile one for macroeconomic policy analysis, an area that UN Women could partner with other organizations within the UN.

As part of recent efforts by the EE Section to review and reformulate its strategic vision and approach, in documents developed in preparation of the various meetings and of the proceedings of the meetings themselves, there has been increased attention by UN Women to understanding and unpacking the underlying causes of disempowerment, inequalities and discrimination and to understand how the entity can contribute to redress them.

Within UN Women, there is also a more explicit adoption of a right-based framework arguing for gender equality and of a more transformative agenda, grounded in feminist economics. This includes highlighting the linkage between poverty and disempowerment, and a clearer recognition that women and men in extreme poverty face a host of similar constraints as well as gender-specific constraints.

The upcoming "Progress of the world's women report 2015: The world survey on women in development" and the EDGE initiative will play an important role

in providing solid evidence and data to further highlight root causes of inequality. It will be important for UN Women to ensure that information emerging from these initiatives is used to guide and prioritize future programming.



Finding 32: UN development and economic bodies provide an important opportunity for catalytic partnerships with UN Women in regard to the rights-based approach.

UN Women's comparative advantages include its membership within the UN system and its ability to influence this through its coordination mandate. Given this role and mandate and its rights-based approach, UN Women's most relevant and strategic partnerships seem to lie with the economic and development offices and agencies such as UNDESA, UNDP and UNCTAD.

As members of UNDG, these offices and agencies adhere to the Human Rights Mainstreaming Mechanism, which prioritizes: (a) promoting a coordinated and coherent UN system-wide approach towards the integration of human rights principles and international standards into UN operational activities for development; (b) providing coherent and coordinated support to resident coordinators and UNCTs in mainstreaming human rights; (c) developing a coherent UN system-wide approach, through cooperation and collaboration among UN agencies, to providing support towards strengthening national human rights protection systems at the request of governments; and (d) contributing to the integration of human rights issues in the overall UNDG advocacy on development agenda and global issues.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ UNDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Mechanism, http://www.undg.org/content/working_groups_networks/undg_human_rights_mainstreaming_mechanism/about_the_undg-hrm.

With UNDESA, UN Women has established strong cooperation through its normative work (particularly related to the post-2015 development process) and operationally with the UNSD on the EDGE initiative (see Section 3.2 for more detail). This is being implemented in partnership with World Bank, FAO, OECD, Asian Development Bank and African Development Bank.

Cooperation with UNCTAD is also an important area for deepened partnerships particularly related to advancing gender-responsive trade policy at global, regional and national levels and also in following up UN Women work on women informal cross-border traders.

UNDP has recently rolled out a new Gender Equality Strategy for 2014-2017, which includes a strong focus on WEE. The strategy, which is guided by a strong rights-based approach identifies eradication of poverty and reduction of gender inequalities by empowering women and promoting and protecting their rights⁹⁰ as its main strategy for advancing WEE.

At the global level, UN Women has already established strong cooperation with UNDP both in its normative work (in ensuring gender quality and women's empowerment were addressed in the post-2015 development framework) and its operational work through the Global Gender and Economic Policy Management Initiative.

While continued cooperation between the two agencies (at a global, regional and country level) will be important in advancing the SDGs, there remain further opportunities to deepen and strengthen this partnership, including increased cooperation, at the country level. While this was observed as sometimes being a challenging relationship to establish and maintain, there are examples of success.

UN Women can benefit from UNDP's established partnerships with central line government ministries,

particularly ministries of finance and planning, and UNDP can benefit from UN Women partnerships with gender equality machinery, civil society and women's organizations in each country. UN Women can also use UNDP work on poverty reduction strategies as an entry point to influence and advance WEE at a macro-level.

In order to address structural barriers to the realization of women's economic and social rights, both UN Women (in its latest concept notes) and UNDP in its Gender Equality Strategy are planning to address women's unpaid work, promote women's decent work, support policy and legislative reforms to ensure women's access to and control over productive assets (including land and credit), and incorporate gender equality perspectives into public finance management. Given the different entry point of each organization, there is an important opportunity (and strong case for giving substantial time to) strengthening partnerships with UNDP to advance WEE.

⁹⁰ UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, "The future we want: Rights and empowerment".

Q11: To what extent were a HRBA and gender equality incorporated in the design and implementation of WEE interventions?



Finding 33: At the global level, there has been a more explicit adoption of a rights-based framework arguing for gender equality and a more transformative agenda grounded in feminist economics. There is also a stronger identified linkage between poverty and disempowerment and a clearer recognition that women and men in extreme poverty face a host of similar constraints, as well as gender-specific constraints.

In line with the UN system-wide common understanding, UN Women has committed the entity to apply an HRBA⁹¹ to development planning (which contributes to the capacity-building of duty bearers to meet their obligations and/or of rights holders to claim their rights). This seeks to operationalize the right to development and further the realization of human rights as laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.⁹²

According to the internal evaluation survey, 72 per cent of UN Women respondents regarded the entity's ability to apply a HRBA as one of its strengths. The global and country case studies also provided significant evidence to demonstrate the entity's conscious shift to adopt this approach. At the global level, an important illustration of this has been the development of UN Women's flagship report "Progress of the world's women 2015", which is focused on women's economic and social rights (including chapters on labour markets, social

protection and social policies, and macroeconomic policies). Its development has seen the collaboration of leading academics, practitioners and advocates in the field of women's social and economic rights. There are high expectations among a number of UN Women key partners that it will play an important role in influencing decision makers and duty bearers in their approach and understanding of WEE.

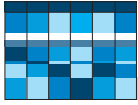
In order to further strengthen its HRBA, evidence from the case studies and survey demonstrate that UN Women needs to expand its efforts to enable more direct participation of excluded groups in higher level and country level normative processes including rural, poor and marginalized women and also men and boys. According to the global survey results, UN Women's ability to support the inclusion and participation of rural and marginalized groups was ranked the lowest among its institutional capacities with only 31 per cent indicating the entity performed either outstanding or good in this area.

Research by UN Women Bangladesh found that only about 20 per cent of gender focal persons in government feel confident in linking gender equality to rights-based approaches—also highlighting some of the capacity barriers to adopting this approach.

Of the respondents from the internal evaluation survey, 91 per cent either strongly agreed or agreed that human rights can be most effectively supported through strengthening rights-holding groups to better organize, document and voice their positions in national processes. This fits with the proposal under Finding 31 of the need to create platforms for women to participate in economic policy making. Many survey respondents emphasize a need for the organization to de-emphasize the developmental concept of "beneficiary" in its work (and labels), and give preference to empowerment concepts such as "guided mastery". The work of UN Women supporting Zubo in Zimbabwe and POURAKHI in Nepal are excellent examples of this from the country case studies.

⁹¹ Examples of this include the rights-based approach used by UN Women in its evidence-based advocacy efforts during the post-2015 process. In UN Women's response to the Secretary-General's request for forward looking proposals to present to the Chief Executives Board on the UN system being "fit for purpose", the entity stated that it is well positioned to advance the human rights agenda from the women's rights perspective. The recent concept note prepared by the EE Section elaborates the relationship between rights and women's economic empowerment, both absolute and relative (to men).

⁹² UN Women 2011-2013 Strategic Plan, Paragraph 32; UN Women 2014-2017 Strategic Plan 2014-2017, Paragraph 35.



Finding 34: While programme documents frequently reference international norms and standards in general terms, the design of UN Women’s global, regional and country-level programmes has greater scope to adopt a systematic approach that links planned interventions with country-specific recommendations and conclusions of relevant treaty bodies, human rights experts and special rapporteurs.

In UN Women efforts to align global WEE programming with intergovernmental normative commitments and processes, its focus has mainly been on CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. However, increased focus has recently been placed on supporting implementation of ILO standards, in particular the ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Workers through advocacy, policy dialogue and linkages with regional and country-level programming.

While many countries refer to CEDAW in general terms in their strategic notes and annual work plans (in particular, whether or not the country has ratified it), country-specific recommendations of CEDAW and other treaty bodies are only mentioned by 3 of the 27 portfolio review countries in their planning and programme documentation. In these three countries, explicit mention is made as to how planned interventions are aligned with specific conclusions/recommendations.

For other COs, while there are clear connections between operational work and support for normative standards and treaty body recommendations, these are not explicitly mentioned in planning and programme documents. For example, UN Women in Brazil mentions in its strategic note that its planned interventions will support the Government of Brazil in its efforts to implement the recommendations of the CEDAW and the Universal Periodic Review of the HRC, but no explicit mention is made in terms of which specific recommendations will be advanced through its work.

Jordan, Bangladesh and Mexico: Designing country-level interventions and indicators to support and measure implementation of international standards and treaty-body recommendations

UN Women Jordan has been effective in linking its operational work to normative standards and treaty-body recommendations in its planning and programme documents and annual reports. Examples of this include the CO’s programme Increasing Women’s Economic Participation in Poverty Pockets in Jordan, which was designed to support the latest CEDAW committee recommendations (from March 2012) underlining the need for a greater focus on young women living in marginal areas, widows and elderly women. The Achieving E-Quality in the ICT Sector Programme in Jordan has supported implementation of CEDAW’s recommendations for women’s greater access to vocational training.

The CO in Bangladesh also identified linkages in its operational and normative work by including a specific section at the beginning of its strategic note linking its planned interventions (related to ending child marriage) to specific CEDAW recommendation and conclusions (including the 2010 report which found that dowry increased women’s vulnerability to domestic violence and that child marriage was another risk factor).

In Mexico, the CO included a specific results indicator within its strategic note related to level of alignment between the national legal and policy frameworks on migration and the gender equality and women’s human rights commitments ratified by Mexico.

For the Bolivia CO, the UN Joint Programme, Productive Assets and Citizenship for Women Living in Extreme Poverty assisted rural indigenous women to register and acquire citizenship and was therefore linked with CEDAW Concluding Comment 19 which called on the state party to “*continue to expedite and facilitate the process of registration of women, particularly indigenous women in rural areas... and*

issue birth certificates and the relevant identity documents.”⁹³ This connection was however only identified by the evaluation team during the case study and not reflected in planning and programme documents.

The evaluation observes that UN Women does not have a systematic approach for linking its planned interventions at global, regional and country levels to support implementation of normative commitments and recommendations of relevant treaty bodies, human rights experts and special rapporteurs. In the UN Women response to the Secretary-General’s request for forward-looking proposals to present to the Chief Executives Board on the UN system being “fit for purpose”, strengthening these areas and linkages is identified as a priority area for the entity.

An example of this gap at the global level is UN Women’s partnership with the Rome-based agencies related to the joint programme Accelerating Progress toward the Economic Empowerment of Rural Women. While the project document references how the planned interventions will support efforts to secure

rural women’s livelihoods and rights in the context of the post-2015 agenda and SDGs, there is no explicit reference made in regard to how the programme will support duty bearers to fulfil the right of rural women to adequate living conditions (in line with Article 14 of CEDAW). Additionally, although the programme is being implemented in seven countries, within the project document, no specific reference was included to the current status of rural women in each country including CEDAW concluding observations and other related reports and recommendations from other treaty bodies and human rights experts

In order to support clearer linkages between operational and normative work and to make these more explicit in planning, reporting and monitoring processes, within the strategic note template, UN Women can include a specific box for each outcome area to identify linkages to norms and treaty body conclusions and recommendations. This would also enable UN Women to better monitor progress towards normative/operational linkages specific to the different thematic areas.

Q12: Were there any constraints (e.g., political, practical, bureaucratic) to addressing human rights and gender equality efficiently during implementation? What level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?



Finding 35: UN Women is challenged in addressing human rights and gender equality considerations in its WEE work by resistance to the human rights-based approach for WEE and under-developed relationships with treaty and intergovernmental bodies beyond CEDAW and CSW.

While there has been an increased interest within UN Women to employ a rights-based approach to WEE work, some staff within the entity noted that

there is still internal and external resistance towards this approach. An example of this was during the post-2015 process, whereby some staff preferred to only work on women’s empowerment and others on women’s rights. In the final position paper UN Women prepared, an attempt was made to reflect both views.

This balanced approach was also supported during the last CSW with the use of language on “Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and the Achievement of Women’s Human Rights”. The debate between the different approaches has also been held outside of the agency. For example, during the post-2015 discussions, some UN Member States expressed strong opposition to a rights-based approach and questioned the relevance of rights to development.

93 Ibid, p. 4.

Another challenge has been that, while there is a clear normative foundation for gender equality and rights, there is no accepted normative foundation for empowerment. In response, UN Women is now trying to define empowerment in the context of rights. Other stakeholders observed that by using a rights perspective, UN Women work on WEE is less likely to have traction within the economic space and especially among mainstream economists. The different approach to gender equality of, for example, Bretton Woods institutions (which generally emphasize an instrumentalist approach) and UN Women's rights-based approach may be seen at odds.

This may signal precisely UN Women's comparative advantage in this area—to articulate an alternative set of macroeconomic policies than are advanced by IFIs, which tend to dominate debates. Heterodox macroeconomists, including gender equality specialists, have identified many mainstream macroeconomic policies advanced by IFIs as a critical source of gender inequality and gender conflict. Thus, UN Women's voice in expanding the menu of viable macroeconomic policy remedies that can promote the structural change needed to achieve gender equality could fill a noticeable void in the policymaking world. To do that, however, UN Women would require significantly greater expertise in macroeconomics and HRBAs to effectively advance an alternative perspective. Collaboration with other UN agencies with expertise in the area of macroeconomics and macro-level analysis such as UNDESA, UNCTAD, UNDP, and UNIDO is also critical. This grouping, which operates under a different paradigm than the IMF, collectively has the right expertise and as such can have a more powerful voice in the fiscal space arena, crucial for WEE.

UN Women is still in the process of developing its relationships with human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms beyond CEDAW and CSW. There have been some examples of effective engagement. For example, with the HRC on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice (which led to joint publication with OHCHR). UN Women also collaborated with the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in 2012 by supporting an

expert meeting which, contributed to her report on unpaid care work and women's human rights.⁹⁴

Strengthened efforts are now needed by UN Women to establish further partnerships and cooperation other intergovernmental treaty bodies such as the HRC and other special rapporteurs and working groups.

One particular opportunity, in light of UN Women's increased engagement with the private sector and its work on the WEPs would be to seek out cooperation with the HRC Working Group on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business. The recent HRC Resolution entitled "Elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights"⁹⁵, which was recently adopted on 26 June at the 26th session of the HRC could also provide important guidance for UN Women's private sector partnerships around WEE.

94 The report was submitted to the General Assembly at its 68th Session (A/68/293).

95 HRC Resolution, "Elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights", (A/HRC/26/L.22), adopted on 26 June at the 26th session of the HRC.

3.4 ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY IN A CHALLENGING CONTEXT

Q13: What operational mechanisms are needed to make UN Women’s approach to WEE more efficient and effective?



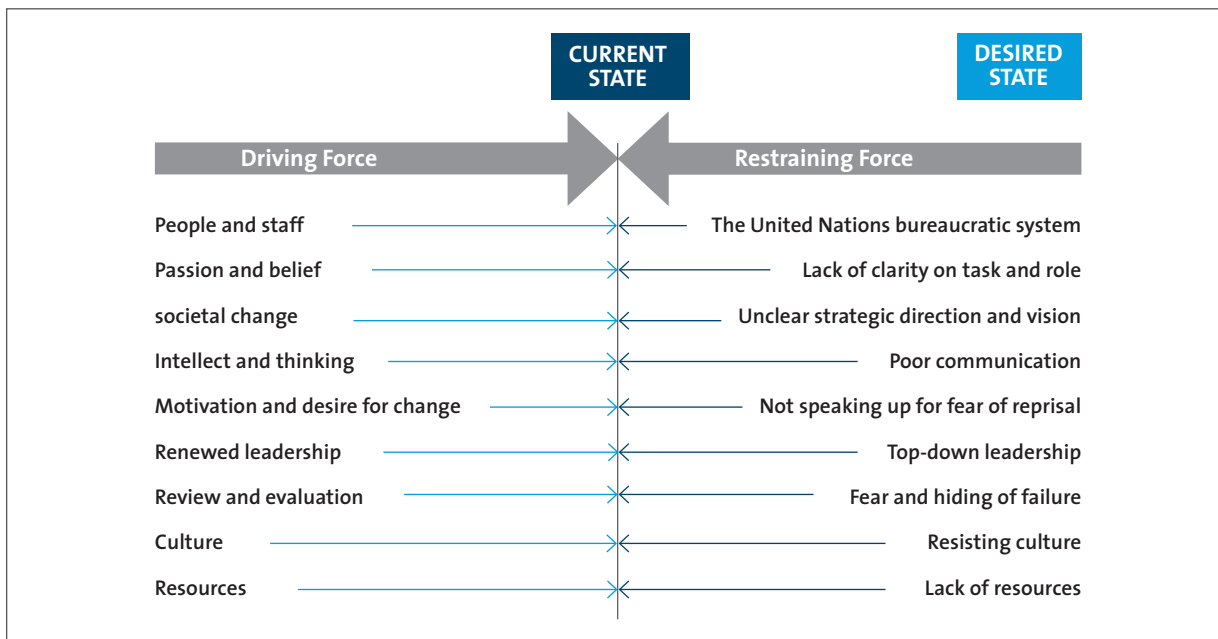
Finding 36: Thematic effectiveness in WEE is fundamentally intertwined with organizational characteristics. WEE has to be seen in context of both UN Women and the wider environment.

The creation of UN Women and the merging of four different entities, each with its own culture and perspective, has been a period of enormous transition. On top of this transition, UN Women has also faced overwhelming expectations in terms of shaping and realizing its powerful triple mandate. This has created natural tensions between focusing on the future identity of UN Women and spending adequate time to effectively merge the preceding entities. Strongly

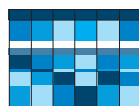
held convictions on the appropriateness of PSLAC are partly a manifestation of this incomplete cultural transition.

The implication of this transitional context, recognized both internally and externally in the evaluation survey, is that UN Women has struggled to make full use of its strengths, such as convening capacity, authoritative voice, network of influence, neutrality, and “holding the torch” for women’s issues. This issue is not unique to WEE—it is organizational—but is further compounded by the external environment of conflict and competition over economic philosophies (explored in Section 3.3).

Figure 3.4a: Forcefield analysis for WEE, based on surveys and case studies



A forcefield analysis⁹⁶, based on the evaluation survey and case studies, reveals some of the enabling and hindering factors (forces) that are currently driving UN Women’s movement towards its objectives for WEE. The aim of forcefield analysis is to: (a) bolster the driving forces, (b) minimize the restraining forces, and (c) prioritize the strongest forces (see Figure 3.4a).



Finding 37: A foundation has been established for results-based management. This can be built on and more closely linked to the TOC for WEE.

As a small donor, IrishAid has limited resources compared to other development partners. It maximizes these by promoting “vertical integration”. As part of their day-to-day work, staff move backwards and forwards between the field, policy fora, the diplomatic community and international processes. This builds a common bond between senior staff and field staff, and grounds policy work in contemporary experience of the grass roots—enhancing IrishAid’s credibility, substantive value, and staff motivation.

For a young organization, UN Women has already established many of the elements of a results-based management system. All country strategic notes include DRFs and organizational efficiency and effectiveness frameworks that are clearly linked to the Strategic Plan. A specific unit in HQ holds responsibility for aggregating monitoring data from countries, and the IEO is establishing a regional presence to strengthen decentralized evaluation. These are all positive achievements.

The evaluation notes that, in some regards, the entity has begun to recognize and respond to these factors, for instance, through elevating the position of Human Resources Director, instigating breakfasts with the Executive Director and town hall meetings. At the same time, however, the mechanisms for negotiating and gathering behind UN Women’s future vision for WEE and engagement with partners (especially the private sector) remain unclear.

The challenge UN Women now faces is to build on this infrastructure so as to better support learning and accountability for WEE. In doing so, it faces five main challenges.

Addressing the challenge of internal structures and discipline is important. Despite the current work by the EE Section, the organization’s understanding of WEE and its work with the private sector must be seen as dynamic and contested spaces that will continue to evolve. Allowing this contest to take place within an open, transparent, and inclusive dialogue is an important first step towards greater shared ownership, and institutional discipline around a common position on WEE.

First, the evaluation found that many COs instinctively know what empowerment is but remain unclear as how to measure it consistently, usefully or meaningfully. An awareness that income is an insufficient measure of outcomes is not matched by clear guidance on alternative indicators.

Second, while current results are framed within the development paradigm: measuring changes against development goals and frameworks, links to human rights instruments, such as the concluding observations of CEDAW, do not feature at the country level. Similarly, there is no indicator at the global level to aggregate progress of women towards the realization of specific economic, social and cultural rights.

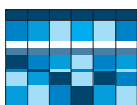
Third, within the monitoring system, there is a heavy reliance on self-reporting by both COs and grantees. Much of this is narrative, with few examples of baselines and no systematic longitudinal tracking of the progress of individual women. In some cases, this is technically possible to reconstruct, such as in the

⁹⁶ Forcefield analysis, developed by Kurt Lewin, is a significant contribution to the fields of social psychology, organization development, process management, and change management.

progress of ICT graduates in Jordan, but the organization does not yet capture such data in real time.

Fourth, investment in planning, monitoring, data analysis, programmatic learning and reporting is not commensurate with investment in other areas, including evaluation. For example, currently the organization has one P3 leading on corporate monitoring, data analysis and reporting, one P4 working part-time on knowledge management.

Fifth, a 2013 global meta-evaluation for UN Women found a significant degree of homogeneity in decentralized evaluation methods, with a preference for qualitative and expert-based approaches. As a result, these all share similar strengths and weakness, and restrict the diversity of evaluative insights available to the organization. The characteristics of WEE would seem to make it well placed as a thematic area to experiment both with more quantitative and empowerment/participation approaches to evaluation.



Finding 38: WEE is a foundation for (and consequence of) enabling wider participation of women in social and political life. Thematically, it provides an important entry point for addressing all areas of UN Women work, including recovery, leadership, governance, and HIV/AIDS. Most especially, however, WEE and gender-based violence are intricately connected at the household level, and integrated programming is essential.

The area where there has been the most significant thematic linkage has been between WEE and governance and national planning. This is particularly the case with GRB, which is fully integrated under the Strategic Plan DRF for WEE and where there is a fair amount of conflation in terms of reporting on WEE and GRB-related results.

One of the key results areas under Goal 2 (Outcome 2.1) refers to adoption and implementation of

national plans, policies and budgets to strengthen WEE. While having GRB-results integrated into the results framework for WEE has resulted in increased synergies and linkages between the two thematic areas (which were evident from the portfolio review and country case studies), it has also raised the question whether or not GRB work should be positioned within the EE Section.⁹⁷

Another important linkage under the thematic area of political participation has been in relation to supporting women's participation in local decision-making structures and processes and in identifying common challenges to livelihoods and service access (which according to the portfolio review is often reported in relation to WEE).

At the strategic level, these linkages are an important reflection of the political nature of EE (both for women and men). At the technical level, the connection is in supporting platforms for entrepreneurs and rural women that advocate their priorities (in relation to their economic participation and rights) and to more actively participate in local planning processes. Significant scope remains for UN Women to cooperate with UNDP in supporting gender-responsive poverty reduction strategies, which cut across all UN Women themes.

The evaluation case studies found a complex and interdependent relationship between EE and gender-based violence. While WEE advocates emphasize the autonomy and choice that EE provides women to leave abusive relationships, the evaluation also heard evidence of changes in intra-household power dynamics leading to increased violence against women (and even increased violence towards men). It is also unclear how important psychological and sociological factors are in determining women's decision to exercise the option of an abusive partner.

⁹⁷ It was clear from the survey responses that both internal and external stakeholders regarded GRB as part of WEE and a number of stakeholders at both the global and country level thought that it would be more logical for GRB to be part of the work of UN Women's EE Section.

Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu: Effective linkages between WEE and ending violence against women

Marketplaces are key sites for economic activity in Pacific Island countries and territories and while they may initially seem small scale, they are not only central to the livelihoods of many households, but they also make a significant contribution to individual countries' gross domestic product. Vendors, especially women, face numerous day-to-day challenges in their workplaces: the hours are long, the profits are low and violence against women is widely reported. In response, UN Women has been implementing Markets for Change, a six-year multi-country initiative.

The goal of the project is to ensure that marketplaces in rural and urban areas in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are safe, inclusive and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Through the project, UN Women is working with stakeholders, service providers and the market vendors themselves to: build and support inclusive, effective and representative advocacy groups; deliver appropriate services, training and interventions; ensure women's voices are heard and taken into account at the decision-making level; and improve physical infrastructure and operating systems.

A systematic review of the evidence on links between EE and intimate partner violence by Vyas and Watts⁹⁸ confirms that the relationship between women's access to an independent source of income and risk of violence is complex. Overall, they find that higher household social economic status (measured by assets) is predominantly protective, and women's secondary education (and, to some extent men's secondary education) is too. However, they also found that women were at increased risk of violence when they had a higher level of educational attainment than

⁹⁸ Vyas S, Watts C, "How does economic empowerment affect women's risk of intimate partner violence in low and middle income countries? A systematic review of published evidence", *Journal of International Development*, 2009, 21: 577-602.

their partner. In some contexts, especially seasonal economies, women's income and employment was also associated with increased risk of violence.

Despite the conflicting evidence available about the causal relationship between EE and gender-based violence—or whether or not increased income through vulnerable employment offers any real additional choice for women—there is some innovative work underway at the country level. For example, the Zimbabwe CO and FGE have supported the community-based organization Zubo to specifically integrate WEE and end violence against women at the household level. The Democratic Republic of Congo CO are pioneering work on using WEE as a means of enabling psychological healing of women survivors of rape.

Overall, however, 91 per cent of respondents to the internal UN Women survey either strongly agreed or agreed that UN Women programming can be better integrated with its other work related ending violence against women, leadership and governance, and peace and security. One lesson for achieving this, which is quietly emerging within the organization, is the importance of multidisciplinary work. This raises one future prospect of structuring the work of the organization not around thematic areas, but around multidisciplinary teams (for example, on a regional basis) with thematic communities of practice that cut across these.



Finding 39: UN Women staff members across the organization have a wide variance in capacity and knowledge in the area of WEE. Efforts to address this have scope for greater integration.

Since the founding of UN Women there has been awareness that internal staff technical capacity is essential to the work of the organization, prompting the inclusion of the function of the UN Women Global Training Centre. While the current profile of UN Women's staff members knowledge of WEE remains

unknown, an initial training needs assessment conducted by the Centre found strong demand for knowledge about WEE.

The evaluation evidence supports this, with particular demand for guidance and training being articulated in the internal survey as: (a) first priority—linking women to markets and creating an enabling environment for WEE; (b) second priority—advocating for macroeconomic policy changes and statistical strengthening for WEE; and (c) third priority—women and technology.

The Centre has recently collaborated with the EE Section to re-launch a training package (including a manual) around gender and migration (based on INSTRAW material). It is also launching an open moderated “Care Economy”. However, the work of the Training Centre remains isolated from other capacity development initiatives within UN Women and the UN system. For example, the Knowledge Gateway developers were unable to integrate the Care Economy course into the current build of the website, and UN Women’s instance of the UNDP online learning platform runs in parallel to UNDP’s own efforts.

Although they are both giant technology companies, Apple and Google have very different processes for creating successful products. Apple’s closed and secretive approach involves long processes of developing products internally, with quality assurance achieved through extensive internal testing and a few trusted experts. Google, on the other hand, rapidly releases ‘betas’ of new products to the public, and tracks which ideas achieve the greatest traction. It then develops these products further, and uses a “fail fast” process to close any ideas that do not prove they have demand. There is no right way to create products and new knowledge, but it is important to have a strategic and consistent organizational approach in order to put the right quality assurance mechanisms in place.

This siloing of formal capacity development initiatives is echoed in the ad hoc approach to informal learning and sharing. For example, a WEE Knowledge Fair was organized by the Programme Division and hosted on the UN Women intranet, while the Policy Division remains more focused on increasing engagement of UN Women staff in the public Knowledge Gateway. While the overall intention of knowledge management is good, the current arrangements are inefficient and do not achieve synergies.

The evaluation has identified two root causes of this situation: (a) a fear of acknowledging failure; and (b) an unresolved organizational approach (i.e., a model for how new knowledge about WEE is created).

With regard to the first root cause, the evaluation survey found that participants viewed the entity as weakest in terms of its culture of staff development and, specifically, its unwillingness to openly acknowledge and discuss failure as an opportunity to learn. While the organization is good at identifying and celebrating success, failure is viewed as a negative outcome rather than an inevitable part of innovation and a valuable source of insight.

This culture also means that UN Women is nervous about what it places in the public domain—preferring completed knowledge products rather than engaging in discussion and debate (UN Women staff are notably absent from Knowledge Gateway discussions). As a consequence there is a lack of institutional clarity about where to place (and where to discover) emerging knowledge: The intranet, Knowledge Gateway, or Training Centre? In response, each platform exercises its own independent decisions about where to locate knowledge. Adopting a more open overall philosophy to knowledge would help to resolve this.

In relation to the second root cause, related to the organizational approach, the hesitation regarding the use of the HRBA to EE filters down into unclear decisions about which knowledge and interpretation gets privileged. In the tradition of the United Nations, the entity tends towards an expert-led culture of

knowledge creation. However, its emphasis on gender-responsiveness, empowerment and participation also create demands to recognize more inclusive forms of knowledge discovery.

Organizational indecision about who has permission to determine what constitutes knowledge has impeded efforts to develop a system for maximizing the available economic expertise within the organization. Without clear leadership towards an inclusive approach, the default position of an expert-led culture has positioned the capacity of the EE Section as a constraint rather than a platform.

For example, while the EE Section has been focused on re-establishing leadership in terms of thought leadership on the organization's TOC (and reactively addressing demands for talking points from senior management), space for responsive (demand-led) programming support to the decentralized offices has been restricted. This has now been recognized as a strategic weakness for the organization.

Over the course of the evaluation, four promising approaches to knowledge management and capacity development were identified that, assuming the roots causes can be address, might better suit UN Women objectives.

First, as knowledge-led businesses, many management consultancies differentiate themselves by developing a range of products that can be easily taught, advocated and applied by any of the company's staff. UN Women already has five clear products relating to WEE: GRB, gender auditing, GES, women's empowerment principles, and time-use surveys. Bolstering and formalizing this product line would be an important contribution to unifying UN Women's approach and better articulating its value addition.

New products might include:

- a) A national level macroeconomic diagnostics tool
- b) A process for convening and facilitating dialogue between diverse stakeholders in order to develop common understanding and agreed actions

- c) Model human resources and gender equality management systems for corporations and governments to operationalize the WEPEs
- d) Model platforms for integrating and empowering rights holders groups to engage in macroeconomic policy making
- e) Real-time national monitoring systems for tracking and correcting expenditure against gender-responsive budgets

Applying a rights-based approach through global operational work

Related to the enjoyment of human rights for women, in particular women's right to land and other productive resources, UN Women partnered with the OHCHR to provide detailed guidance for lawmakers and policy makers, as well as CSOs and other stakeholders, to support the adoption and effective implementation of laws, policies and programmes to respect, protect and fulfil these rights. Through the publication, "Realizing women's rights to land and other productive resources", both organizations employed a rights-based approach informed by international legal and policy instruments (including Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and CEDAW).

Second, other creative industries, such as the technology sector, have embraced the power of competition to drive innovation and new knowledge. UN Women has already embraced this model through its support to SEED, but there is scope to expand this further. Issuing prizes at the global, regional and national level to solve problems identified through UN Women analysis promises to be an efficient mechanism for expanding UN Women's reach beyond its own capacity.

Third, other UN agencies, such as WFP, have had considerable success in consolidating their work

through the development and renewal of programme guidance manuals. These act as a single point of reference for country-level staff, and ICT means that they can now be more easily kept up-to-date.

Fourth, many corporations have nurtured online communities for their products as a highly efficient means for providing customer service. These often include elements of gamification to promote peer-

to-peer support and trouble-shooting. They also use the help forums to regularly develop frequently asked questions to the issues that are demanding the greatest attention. Specific off-the-shelf solutions for help desks are now plentiful⁹⁹ and could offer a more promising option for the EE Section to develop a more responsive approach to meeting regional and country-level needs. The frequently asked questions could also be more easily used as the basis for Knowledge Gateway material.

Q14: To what extent is learning from initiatives implemented in the field (including FGE) feeding into the global approach and vice-versa?



Finding 4o: While knowledge sharing at the regional level is being increasingly supported with the establishment of the regional WEE adviser positions, COs lack information about WEE work taking place outside of their region and require significantly more policy support and technical guidance from HQ in order to strengthen their efforts to advance WEE

As part of the annual reporting process, PPGU compiles results reported by COs by thematic area. This was done in both 2012 and 2013 for all thematic areas, including WEE. However, there is no clear evidence that, beyond feeding the annual report, these exercises were used to systematically identify emerging lessons learned and good practices on WEE to feed into the entity's thinking and programming.

Similarly, some examples and experiences from countries feed into the reports and technical inputs that UN Women develops for global intergovernmental processes. However, there is little evidence that they are also used more broadly inside the organization. Finally, while HQ has developed some WEE specific knowledge products and guidance notes, it appears

that these have not been widely and effectively disseminated within the organization.

There is generally good awareness among COs about work on WEE in their regions, especially in regions where regional WEE advisers are in place. Greater gaps exist in terms of knowledge sharing and dissemination between the regions. UN Women internal stakeholders in all five country case studies, stated that they lacked awareness about global work and results on WEE outside of their region. Results of the internal evaluation survey show that 23 per cent of staff think that UN Women is extensively or often documenting good practices in relation to WEE, and 25 per cent think that the entity is effectively supporting new ideas or scaling up things that are seen to work for WEE.

While some efforts have been made to promote knowledge sharing within UN Women, including the internal WEE Thematic Dialogue of November 2013, the Knowledge Fair at the HQ level, and a 2013 global meeting in Santa Cruz, Bolivia to exchange country experiences on how to strengthen GRB, the evaluation team did not encounter other significant examples of meetings and events where WEE information and experience were shared inside the organization.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ For example, see desk.com.

¹⁰⁰ In some cases, the regional offices facilitated such exchanges and some of the consulted CO staff felt that they had a good understanding of WEE work within their region but not outside their region. Several consulted CO staff stated that they were not aware of what was being done on WEE globally.

In order to turn its extensive knowledge base into a business advantage, a major management consultancy instigated “million dollar slides”. The single most important insight from each engagement is captured on a single PowerPoint slide that is saved on the intranet and tagged with information about the type of client, job and the team that worked on it. These key insights can be easily searched when consultants are starting new assignments, and everyone in the organization—from the managing partner down—is required to give 15 minutes of time to elaborate on the million dollar slide.

Knowledge and information sharing happens mainly in an ad hoc and informal way, among individuals working on similar issues, but not in a systematic and institutionalized way.

The Intranet—the default mechanism for knowledge sharing—is also not considered as user-friendly and conducive to sharing of knowledge, experiences, results and best practices, as too much information is collected in it without sufficient filtering or pushing information out to relevant staff. It is also not part of the workflow of staff members, and there is little evidence to suggest that this technology-driven approach is successful in other organizations.

As a WEE-specific knowledge-sharing platform, the Knowledge Gateway has the potential to act as an information clearinghouse, but few UN Women staff members are active members. According to the internal UN Women survey, 79 per cent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the Knowledge Gateway must be the centrepiece of UN Women’s future work on knowledge management.¹⁰¹ Only 39 per cent of staff felt that the entity currently makes best use of this tool.

¹⁰¹ Some COs felt that a separate and more specific data and management tool was needed to collect and facilitate sharing of processes and practices and knowledge products in relation to WEE, rather than using the Knowledge Gateway as an internal knowledge sharing mechanism.

In terms of development of corporate-level tools and guidance to support UN Women work related to WEE, there is a pressing need for updated resources to support COs in their work. Out of the internal survey respondents, only 30 per cent of surveyed staff felt that UN Women corporate guidance on WEE is clear and useful for their work and only 16 per cent stated that the entity is extensively or often providing tools and products that can be adapted to support WEE in different contexts.



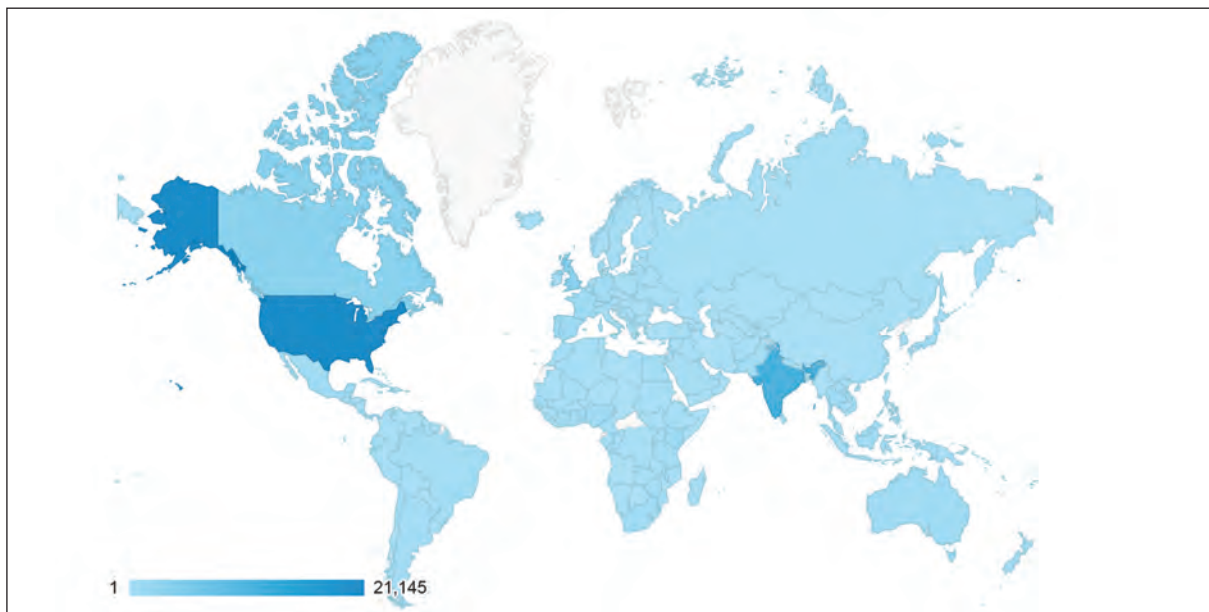
Finding 41: UN Women, especially in its coordinating role in the UN system, is well positioned to have voice through social media and to use communications to advance its work on WEE.

The evaluation’s interactions with COs highlighted the contribution that good communications can make to their ability to capture the attention and interest of policy makers. For example, in Moldova, professional communications approaches have been effectively used to disseminate the findings of a time-use survey and policy insights from existing statistical data sets.

Professional communications can also be a great power leveler. For example, UN Women currently has no organized means of capturing the popular global narrative on gender equality and economics, contributing to its hesitation around both the HRBA and private sector engagement. This is particularly relevant given UN Women’s resources compared to other economic actors that are philosophically grounded in a neo-liberal utilitarian framework.

UN Women has made some strides to address this possibility. For example, the HeForShe campaign has begun to expand beyond ending violence against women and to promote women’s empowerment. The Knowledge Gateway is also a response to the communications paradigm.

Figure 3.4b: Distribution of Knowledge Gateway users



The activeness of a blog is deemed to be critical to its success.¹⁰² According to Zafir-opoulos and Vrana¹⁰³ the activity level of a blog depends on two parameters: the blogger, who needs to update the content regularly, and the readers who need to visit and interact often with the blog.

An analysis of media audiences conducted by the evaluation found that the Knowledge Gateway, with 2,000 registered users and 50,000 visitors as of March 2014, is the only site in its network to have successfully met the needs of its audience in terms of regular interaction, community formation and

expression of shared identity. This is an important achievement that can be built on in terms of more even and inclusive coverage (especially of non-English speaking countries—see Figure 3.4b).

A similar asymmetry in favour of economically dominant countries is found in a map of the number of Twitter accounts (Y axis) and number of Twitter followers within the UN Women WEE network.¹⁰⁴ North America-based organizations and individuals have by far the strongest presence in terms of audience and voice, followed by Europe. Africa has more accounts but fewer followers than either Arab States or Asia. The lowest voice in the network is from South America and Oceania (Figure 3.4c).

Among the different types of Twitter users, mainstream media is by far the most efficient means of reaching the Twitter audience for WEE. This invokes a case for considering potential partnerships between the Knowledge Gateway and mainstream media, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s work with the Guardian Development Network.

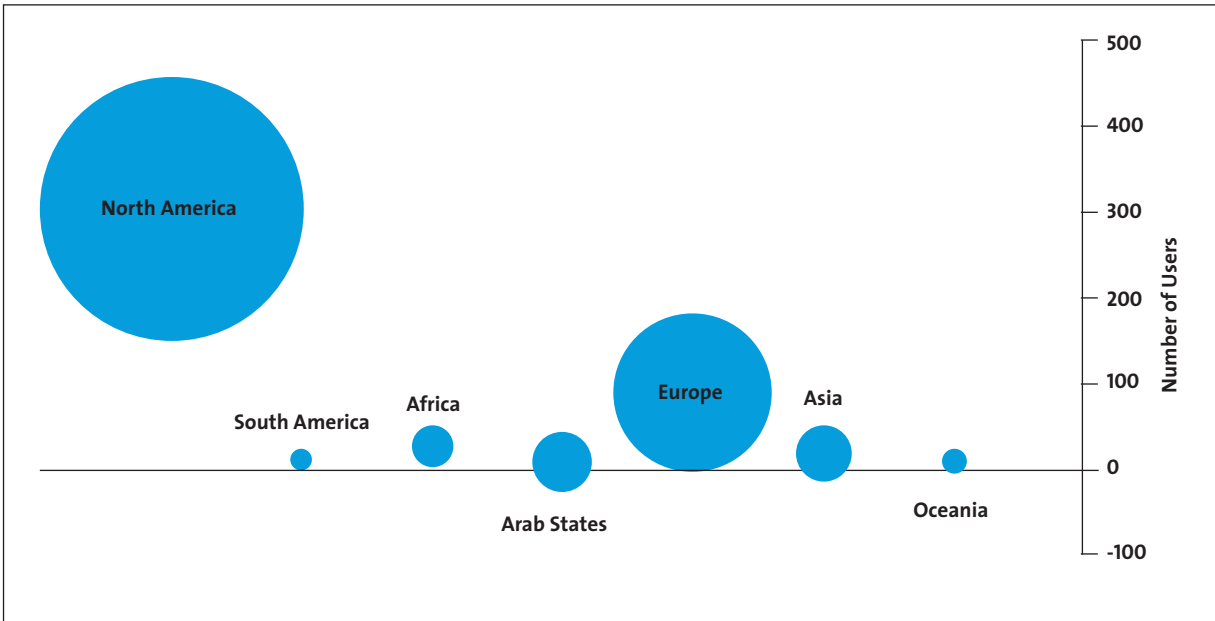
¹⁰² ‘Activeness’ includes the frequency of blog posts, and the level of engagement with a blog’s users. Success, here, is defined in terms of the effectiveness of blogs in meeting the needs of their users; and thus growing and maintaining engagement. See also:

1) Papacharissi, Z. “Audiences as Media Producers; Content Analysis of 260 Blogs” in Tremayne M., (ed.) *Blogging, Citizenship, and the Future of Media*, Routledge, London, 2007.
2) Tremayne M., “Blogging, Citizenship, and the Future of Media”, Routledge, London Rogers, 2007.

¹⁰³ Zafiroopoulos, K., and Vrana, V. “Media and Communications - Technologies, Policies and Challenges: Hyperlink Analysis of Political Blogs Communication Patterns”, Nova Science Publishers, Incorporated, New York, 2011.

¹⁰⁴ Source: Twitter API, Twiangulate.

Figure 3.4c: Twitter voice within the UN Women WEE-focused network



UN accounts are the only other category of users that are highly efficient in terms of the ratio of audience reach to number of accounts. In terms of absolute reach, individual users who are writing in their own capacity have much greater presence than institutional users. Traditional advocates, such as NGOs and international organizations, complete the users with the greatest reach in the network.

Surprisingly, the least efficient reach appears to be through corporations and dedicated campaigns. Think tanks and social enterprises also appear to offer little scope for broad reach—although this does not measure the quality and influence of social media interactions.

Overall, this limited analysis of UN Women’s influence and voice in UN Women’s social media (Twitter) network suggests that:

- a) A concerted effort is required to shift the social media conversation from Anglo and western centric, to broader representation.
- b) The most efficient approach to extending UN Women’s reach is likely to be through engaging

individuals and media houses, and using core UN social media accounts rather than setting up dedicated campaign presences.

- c) Private sector voice is achieved mainly through paid advertising and does not seem to offer UN Women a comparative advantage in terms of social media reach (in fact, the opposite is may even be true).

3.5 SCALABLE GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

From the findings and illustrations of good practice integrated throughout this report, the evaluation team has identified a number of areas where there is a potential for organizational learning, scaling up and replication across UN Women work on WEE at global, regional and country levels. This section highlights a number of key overarching lessons learned that have wider relevance beyond UN Women WEE interventions and emerging good practice areas.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson 1: Small localized projects will change the lives of some women but do not necessarily bring about macro-level changes.

While UN Women work to increase the income of individual women through local-level income generation activities has contributed to lifting women above the poverty line and supporting them to gain confidence and a sense of control over their lives, as stand-alone interventions, these not have effectively enabled women to climb the value chain or access high value sectors of the economy. Such efforts need to be complemented with interventions to support broader changes that create an enabling and supportive environment for women entrepreneurs—including control of assets and social decision-making—and also address bottlenecks that deny women economic opportunities, such as lack of access to finance and credit, and lack of access to markets. Research and evidence generation play an important role in creating an awareness among policy makers about these obstacles and barriers and in equipping women's groups with the right data and information to lobby for change. Supporting women at a collective, rather than individual level is also important in positioning them to participate and influence economic policies and laws and contribute to poverty reduction efforts at the national and local levels.

Moreover, to be successful, women farmers, entrepreneurs and workers require a robust and stable economy. This implies that issues such as full employment, employment guarantee programs, capital

controls (to limit economic volatility), and central bank policy are all gender equality issues, even though, on their surface, they may appear to be unrelated to gender equality and women's empowerment. This underscores once again the relevance of UN Women HQ and COs pursuing work in the area of gender-responsive macroeconomic policy.

Lesson 2: Addressing social norms that hinder the active participation of women in the economic and social spheres is key to advancing WEE.

Women's ability to fully realize and access their economic and social rights is often adversely affected by strong negative cultural and religious beliefs that perpetuate inequalities in terms of access, control and ownership of resources in all sectors of the economy. In response, UN Women COs have increasingly recognized the need for WEE-related interventions to address social, cultural and traditional barriers to women's economic participation including power relations within the family and society. In an increasing number of countries, UN Women work involves greater engagement with community and religious leaders, and with men and boys, in order to garner their support and involvement in advancing WEE and in bringing positive change and influence in traditional gender and social norms.

UN Women work with traditional leaders, chiefs, men and boys is helping to create an enabling environment at the community-level to facilitate women's increased participation in the informal and formal economy. For example, in Jordan, UN Women successfully engaged with men and families in order to garner their support to women's participation in internship programmes with ICT companies by addressing concerns related to transportation commutes and working hours.

Here, too, macroeconomic policy is relevant. Rising employment rates for women have coincided with a decline in male employment rates, contributing to gender conflict. The male breadwinner norm still holds sway, and efforts to shift gender norms is one way to address gender conflict, but the lack of jobs

or livelihood opportunities at the national level is the binding constraint, requiring attention to national level policies that inhibit job growth.

Lesson 3: Platforms that allow interface between women-led grass-roots organizations and decision makers enhance the understanding and appreciation of women's needs and priorities in realizing their economic and social rights.

Through its established relationships with government ministries and the women's movement, UN Women COs have been well-placed to convene these groups in order to provide fora for women to identify challenges and obstacles to their participation in the formal and informal economy. While UN Women work has increasingly focused on work with rural women in poor communities, it has had limited results in providing women's organizations (particularly those representing women from marginalized groups) with access to policy and decision makers at local and national levels in order to identify obstacles to their economic participation and realization of their rights. For example, the case studies demonstrated that while UN Women has harvested important information about barriers to women's economic participation through its work with women entrepreneurs, this information is not always being effectively channelled up to decision makers and used to inform plans, policies and budgets at local and national levels, in particular poverty reduction strategies.

An exception to this has been UN Women work with women in the informal cross-border trade, which has connected women traders at local, national and regional levels with each other and with decision makers and policy processes, and enabled them to influence trade-related laws and policies (see Good Practice Area 5 below).

Lesson 4: Attempts to promote WEE require a multidimensional and well-integrated approach emphasizing women's particular conditions and challenges.

Through its country-level work, UN Women has identified an increased need to understand and address

influencing and intersecting factors that affect and contribute to women's economic disempowerment. For example, UN Women has increasingly recognized the need to mainstream WEE into humanitarian action and resilience work by increasing women's access to services and promoting their EE and participation in social cohesion efforts. One example is UN Women work in Jordan, which has highlighted that interventions to support the economic rights and participation of Syrian refugee women are needed in parallel with efforts to also support host communities, as both have been affected by the crises.

UN Women work has also shown that there is an important linkage between women's safety from gender-based violence and overall security conditions and their ability to use and access available services and participate in economic and decision-making activities. In response, there have been increased efforts to acknowledge the intersectionality between UN Women WEE and ending violence against women work. An example of this has been regional programming in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to support safe and violence-free marketplaces for women (see Good Practice Area 2 below) and the Port Moresby Safe City Programme in Papua New Guinea, which responded to high levels of marketplace violence by building safe markets with, and for, women and girls.¹⁰⁵

Another example of multidimensionality is UN Women work on HIV and inheritance rights in sub-Saharan Africa (Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe). Work in this area has shown that women living with HIV are particularly susceptible to property and inheritance rights violations because of the widespread stigma associated with HIV and that denial of these rights deprives them of critical assets that otherwise would provide them with greater bargaining power within their households

¹⁰⁵ Source: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/4/new-zealand-increases-funding-for-safe-city-programme-in-png#sthashyLCdtVhk.dpuf>.

and economic security from the consequences of HIV/AIDS on their families and communities.¹⁰⁶

There is a need to understand the multiple forms of discrimination that many women face and how these intersect with gender inequality. The inability of women as rights holders to access and realize their economic rights has also emerged as an important theme. UN Women country-level work, particularly in Latin America (Brazil, Bolivia, Guatemala and Mexico) and South Eastern Europe (Bosnia-Herzegovina) through its work with rural indigenous and Romani women living in high poverty areas, has expanded understanding of this issue.

REPLICABLE LESSONS FROM CO EXPERIENCES

The following insights were reported by COs in their strategic notes and were analysed as part of the evaluation portfolio review.

Several countries have identified that the most effective programming considers and addresses social norms around WEE. In Mozambique and Egypt, assessment of power relations in the political, economic and social spheres was highlighted as an important step in programme design. Other countries' experiences, including Uganda, Nepal, Liberia and Zimbabwe emphasize the effectiveness of working with men, boys, interfaith and traditional leaders in addressing women's rights.

Afghanistan and Bangladesh have found that effective WEE programmes need to include proactive protection and prevention approaches to end violence against women before it happens. Lessons from Liberia highlight the importance of supporting adult literacy as a component of WEE training, especially when working with the most marginalized groups.

Experience of working collaboratively with the private sector in Nigeria, Papua New Guinea and Jordan has

¹⁰⁶ Source: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/11/gambia-regional-policy-dialogue-on-property-and-inheritance-rights-in-the-context-of-hiv#sthash.JUPuaNAk.dpuf>.

revealed that, while many companies are very enthusiastic to get involved, their awareness and capacity for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women tends to be low.

Expanding public-private partnerships seems to be most effective where corporations and civil society are given an opportunity to contribute to the design of programming, even if only at a high level. Helping to feel that they have shaped a programme or project increases the sense of ownership and the future likelihood of financial support.

A common lesson among many COs is the importance of raising UN Women's political profile as a means to leverage wider change. Experiences in Viet Nam, Egypt and Nigeria suggest that UN Women can be more effective through diversifying its partnership base to include economic and planning ministries and financial bodies. UN Women Papua New Guinea found that supporting exposure and participation in international forums and global programmes has proved to be an effective tool to ensure political will.

While they tend to be considered elsewhere in UN Women's strategic plan, experience in Albania and Bangladesh suggests that political parties can represent an important obstacle to women's empowerment, including WEE. In Bangladesh, effective WEE programming has been associated with a focus on women's individual and collective leadership across all levels and sectors: *"encouraging leadership politically, economically, and in disaster management holds the potential to empower women in a way that simply skills building does not."*¹⁰⁷

An important role for UN Women identified by Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Brazil, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania is to broker a common WEE agenda for the women's movement. This is most effective when the relationship between the women's movement and government is also facilitated, and leadership of the women's movement is rotated between members.

¹⁰⁷ UN Women, Strategic Plan 2014-2017, Bangladesh.

Developing multidimensional programmes and aggregating multidisciplinary inputs are required to address WEE in a holistic and effective way, according to lessons learned in Brazil, Ethiopia, Liberia, Rwanda, Nepal, Moldova and Pakistan. In some cases, such as UN Women work in Kenya, this means addressing market failures through a multipronged approach that tackles constraints on both the supply side and the demand side.

The most effective programmes, based on experience in Papua New Guinea, Uganda and Guatemala, are those that manage to localize programming (including global and regional programmes) and partnerships to the national and sub-national context—and to ensure linkages are maintained between efforts at these different levels.

Many COs—including Zimbabwe, Mexico, Albania and Papua New Guinea—point to the long-term nature of effective WEE programming and emphasize the need for multi-year flexibly implemented approaches. Adaptable programmes and time frames require special efforts to communicate with non-core funding partners.

Linked to the need for long-term flexibility, experience in Viet Nam, Mozambique, Brazil, Nepal, Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea highlights the effectiveness of empowerment-based approaches to WEE programming. This can include supporting partners to be able to conduct gender analysis of laws and policies and develop their own recommendations, involving young and vulnerable women as leaders, promoting champions and agents of change, motivating and mobilizing grass-roots groups to participate and enact change in their own communities, and taking a learning (rather than expert) approach to UN Women work.

Work in these countries, as well as Pakistan and Nigeria, highlights the importance of actively supporting the capacity development of civil society WEE organizations—especially grass-roots organizations. They especially emphasize the need to be realistic about, and allocate sufficient resources to, the processes involved in project start-up and coordination

Strengthening data, monitoring and evaluation is both a key issue for effective WEE programming and an issue identified by COs where greater capacity is needed. Specific elements identified by COs, including Egypt, Ethiopia, Moldova, Bangladesh, Uganda, Brazil, Mozambique, Albania and Guatemala, are:

- Addressing the lack of sex-disaggregated data
- Building implementing partners' capacities in results-based management
- Collection of reliable monitoring data
- Use of pre- and post-capacity assessment tools
- Building accountability measures for monitoring, data collection, analysis and reporting
- Knowledge coordination
- Evaluation of South-South cooperation
- Ensuring the existence of baselines, performance frameworks and TOCs
- Increasing focus on impact to facilitate ongoing adjustment of strategies

Alongside monitoring and evaluation, communications capacity has been highlighted by COs as a major lesson learned in effective WEE programming. Papua New Guinea, Albania, Egypt, Mozambique and Mexico have all found that communications and visual material, such as documentary films and photos, have provided visibility to UN Women work and have been strong tools for influencing policy and resource mobilization. In Cambodia, FGE supported the combination of WEE with HIV/AIDS through joint micro-enterprise development with counseling and referrals. This also linked to the media to increase outreach and combined public education with leadership development opportunities for HIV-positive women.

In relation to coordination and partnerships, experience in Mozambique and Bangladesh highlights the importance of maintaining relationships through appropriate existing arrangements—avoiding the proliferation of more committees. Mexico and

Pakistan have found that UN Women can use its normative mandate to drive UNCT towards targeted strategic interventions based on mutual respect and comparative advantage. An important element of coordination in Zimbabwe and Uganda has been strengthening platforms that allow interface between women-led grass-roots organizations and decision makers.

SCALABLE GOOD PRACTICE AREAS

The following good practice areas identified below are intended to capture some of the innovation, creativity and learning within UN Women and to highlight good practice areas that have the potential to be scaled up and replicated where relevant across the entity.

1. Work with extractive industries

Subject to robust processes of due diligence, work with extractive industries can be a critical entry point for UN Women to support the realization of economic and social rights and advance WEE. It is an area where women have much to gain and lose economically. Evidence suggests that a gender bias exists in the distribution of risks and benefits in extractive industries projects: benefits accrue to men in the form of employment and compensation, while the costs, such as family/social disruption and environmental degradation, fall most heavily on women.¹⁰⁸

This year, UN Women initiated a new partnership with Publish What You Pay, a global network made up of more than 800 member organizations. Through this partnership UN Women is raising awareness about the gender equality dimensions of the extractive industry and seeking to explore ways in which women can play a central role in the governance of their communities' natural resources. Through this partnership and its country-level operational work, UN Women is assessing how women can effectively participate in the extractive industry across the mining value chain; how women can benefit—either as business owners, employees

and benefactors of extractive industry revenue; and how the industry impacts women's safety, security, livelihoods and health.

UN Women work, together with the efforts of other organizations such as World Bank and UNDP, in the area of extractive industries is starting to have an impact in supporting increased women's benefits in terms of skills, jobs, and compensation and business development opportunities. Interventions of UN Women in this area also provide an illustration of a rights-based approach to EE as interventions have targeted issues such as land rights and the right to benefit from development. Through its work in this area, UN Women has also been able to strengthen its private sector partnerships to advance and support WEE.

2. Supporting women's access to markets

The need to support women's increased access to markets has been a widespread lesson of its micro-credit work with women entrepreneurs, and lack of access to markets constitutes a major bottleneck in advancing WEE. A highly innovative UN Women initiative has been Markets for Change, which aims to ensure that marketplaces in rural and urban areas in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are safe, inclusive and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Through the project, UN Women is working with stakeholders, service providers and the market vendors themselves to: build and support inclusive, effective and representative advocacy groups; deliver appropriate services, training and interventions; ensure women's voices are heard and taken into account at the decision-making level; and improve physical infrastructure and operating systems.

In 2013 the Government of Kenya announced that 30 per cent of public spending on procurement of goods, services and works would be allocated to women, youth and persons with disabilities, but very few entrepreneurs knew about this. UN Women has been working closely with key government agencies to increase awareness among micro and small-scale entrepreneurs about these opportunities. Realizing that creating awareness alone was not enough, UN Women began training women entrepreneurs on key

¹⁰⁸ World Bank, "Gender in extractive industries", 2013, <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTOGMC/EXTTEXTINDWOM/0,,contentMDK:21242269~menuPK:3157104~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:3156914,00.html>.

areas such as how to fill out winning tenders, where to look for opportunities (including credit facilities), and how to register their businesses (as this is a pre-requisite). This was driven by learning from the women themselves about why they were not participating and the challenges they face (actual or perceived).

Focusing on the supply side alone (i.e., the women entrepreneurs) was also found to be insufficient, so work was also initiated with public entities (i.e., the buyers). The focus has been on ensuring that the buyers are fully conversant with the relevant legislation and requirements, their role in ensuring the implementation of the 30 per cent quota, and helping them to overcome challenges to this. Recommendations from all these forums are being fed into the ongoing policy discussions for consideration in proposed amendments to the public procurement law.¹⁰⁹

3. Alignment of WEE work with emerging labour force trends

In Jordan, the partnership of UN Women with the Ministry of ICT, the Cisco Academy and Jordanian universities through the Achieving E-Quality in the ICT Sector Programme represents an inspiring example of innovative and forward-looking work. The programme has been strategic in terms of targeting a sector of national importance, high potential for job growth, and with the prospect of flexible working conditions. The 10-year programme, which is now in its fourth and final stage, aims to increase women's participation in the ICT sector by providing them with the ICT skills to compete with their male counterparts. The programme has included four main components, the first a technical component to support ICT students (through reimbursing their educational fees) to take the Cisco course and exam. The second phase has involved supporting job placement of graduates by linking students with the ICT market. This has been achieved through the organization of a Technology Parade and Graduate

Internship programme. The other components have consisted of research efforts (aimed at establishing a baseline to measure progress) and public awareness-raising efforts within the universities.

UN Women Nepal has successfully targeted national policies, governance and practice affecting women migrant workers. As a result of the CO's advocacy, the government enacted the Foreign Employment Act 2007 and Regulation 2008, which ends discriminatory provisions and adopts specific measures to safeguard women migrant workers. The joint efforts of UN Women, government and CSOs to empower women migrant workers have contributed to rights-based initiatives including lifting a ban on women migrant workers and incorporating the issue in the national agenda. At the local level, UN Women has supported the establishment of community alert groups in 31 village development committees to generate awareness on safe migration, enhanced provision of paralegal services to women migrant workers, and increased media coverage of migration-related issues.

4. Private sector partnerships in support of WEE

The GES initiative, which has been implemented in Mexico, Egypt and Jordan, has proven to be a highly effective entry point for UN Women work with the private sector and an example of how such partnerships can be used to advance WEE. The GES certification system, which has as its foundations the relevant ILO conventions and international human rights instruments, has enabled UN Women to apply a rights-based approach to its private sector engagement. The GES certification system includes criteria on equal pay and equal treatment in relation to recruitment, employment and termination of contracts, as well as provision of a safe working environment with an effective sexual harassment policy, and flexible, non-discriminatory work practices. The GES certification system, which is listed as a tool on the women's empowerment principles, is an example of an initiative that has already been successfully replicated and that has the potential to be implemented further in a larger number of countries.

¹⁰⁹ See more at: <http://www.empowerwomen.org/circles/open-discussion-about-laws-and-policies-to-advance-womens-economic-empowerment/gender-responsive-public-procurement-in-ethiopia#sthash.QcplWFor.dpuf>.

5. Supporting women's coalitions and organizations to amplify their collective voice to influence trade forums and affect policy change at local, national and regional levels

UN Women work with women in the informal cross-border trade (in Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Liberia, Mali, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) has connected women traders at local, national and regional levels with each other, decision makers and policy processes, and enabled them to influence change. Through their collective efforts, women traders have been better positioned to advocate for gender-responsive trade-related laws and policies, promotion of a favourable tax regime, service delivery in cross-border markets, inclusion of their priorities in national budgets and mainstream trade processes and fulfilment of their “right to information” on regional trade agreements and protocols.

UN Women success in this area has the potential to be replicated and applied to other areas of work,

particularly efforts to support local collectives of women to participate and influence economic and social policies and laws and contribute to poverty reduction efforts (including linked to the post-2015 process) at national and local levels.

6. Support to engendered agricultural development

UN Women Zimbabwe has supported the development of Zubo, a women-led rights-holders civil society group indigenous to one of the poorest communities in Zimbabwe. Zubo has supported local women to reclaim their traditional role of fishers, including designing and launching a unique women-friendly fishing craft that is operated by 22 local women. Dried fish have been marketed by these women through linkages with other UN Women project work on trade fairs and cross-border trading. The Zubo women are now exploring new opportunities higher-up the value chain, including developing a fish farm to provide a more efficient return on investment and ensure greater sustainability.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As a systems and theory-based evaluation, this report does not attempt to make definitive statements relating to causal relationships between the work of UN Women and the status of WEE. Rather, it seeks to identify patterns in the effectiveness, relevance and

organizational efficiency of UN Women contributions to the systems in which it sits. The five meta-narratives articulated by this report seek to help frame these patterns and, in doing so, provide a platform from which UN Women can move forward.

4.1 RELEVANCE

Conclusion 1: In principle, UN Women is well placed in the system to influence WEE at the global, regional and country level. Recent efforts by the entity to redefine its vision may now provide the strategic and conceptual framework needed to maximize this advantage.

UN Women has recognized that a lack of strategic focus in WEE has, until now, hampered it from being fully recognized as a central actor on WEE at the global, regional and national levels. An implicit and evolving TOC has insufficiently shaped the organization's programming and results frameworks. It has also hindered the production of clear corporate guidance regarding UN Women's normative position and operational approach to WEE.

The main implications of having no definitive TOC for WEE have been limited strategic coherence across the organization, and this has reduced the ability to expand and deepen partnerships. In overall terms, this has hindered UN Women in attempts to maximize its strengths and strategic position within the international system.

UN Women is already strategically well-positioned to influence WEE at a global and country level through its normative and coordination work. The entity's recent efforts to revise its strategic focus and clarify an overarching TOC for WEE are extremely positive. These will likely contribute to greater re-alignment of the entity's operational and regional work with its implicit TOCs.

In redefining its TOC for WEE, there is considerable scope for the entity to be more forward looking. While UN Women's increased focus on decent work and care work recognizes changes in labour markets and women's role in the economy, its strategic approach to WEE has largely been focused on responding to the current situation based on analyses of the current situation, past trends, and known development pathways. Its work has also not focused on structural economic change, so much as helping women adapt to less than ideal economic conditions locally and globally.

There are some inspiring examples of forward-looking work, such as the support to the ICT sector in Jordan, but—in total—UN Women lacks a future-looking narrative. There is a convincing case for the forthcoming TOC to position UN Women more strongly in relation to global meta-trends, such as ubiquitous Internet connectivity, 500 million more women in the global middle class by 2020, climate change, rising global inequality, declining male access to employment and the resulting gender conflict and competition over jobs, and the instability resulting from financial liberalization.

Conclusion 2: UN Women's current comparative advantage in the area of WEE is its policy and normative work. It could potentially be a knowledge hub and thought-leader for human rights-based and gender-responsive work on macroeconomic policy, as well as macro- and meso-level policies.

UN Women has made a significant contribution to global discourse and normative frameworks on WEE, in particular through the post-2015 Open Working Group. Combined with its global reports, the entity's normative function has added value through bringing a rights-based perspective and approach to intergovernmental dialogue. While UN Women normative resources are limited, its coordination mandate and growing country-level presence can also be leveraged to help complete the task of effectively integrating WEE across all relevant post-2015 development goals and indicators.

At both the country and global level, the entity's triple mandate means it is well positioned to assist agencies within the UN system (particularly at the country level) in engendering advancing sustainable development goals in areas relevant to WEE. There is considerable scope to leverage UN Women's normative mandate to advocate for inclusive macroeconomic policy, using a rights-based approach that addresses the structural barriers to WEE. UN Women work on regional trade policies in East Africa is an example of such work. Meso-level policy advocacy (such as to promote women's access to agricultural credit and infrastructure investment in ways that reduce women's care burden) would be an important corollary of this work.

To date, UN Women has put in place only very limited human resources capacity or guidance in relation to macroeconomic policy work, although macroeconomics is a stated intention of current Policy Division thinking, and fits within UN Women's implicit TOC to support the creation of the conditions required for sustainable inclusive growth. Expanding UN Women work in this domain would require new partnerships (including additional funds to enable UN Women to influence and enter partnerships through joint programmes) and significant capacity development (in particular, training and guidance tools for regional and country-level staff working on WEE). It also represents a more promising comparative advantage for long-term sustainable impact than isolated micro- and meso-level interventions.

Even within its existing capacity, there is proven scope for UN Women to contribute to gender-responsive

Learning from the experience of the Make Poverty History Coalition in Australia, which successfully lobbied the Australian Government to increase foreign aid to 0.5 per cent of GNI by 2015, the Global Poverty Project set out to create a new movement of activists in support of the goal of eradicating extreme poverty. Early in its work in 2008, the project focused on joint campaigns (in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom) that engaged new groups of people and raised resources for existing poverty-focused NGOs. By focusing on providing financial and popular support to the sector, rather than itself, in a few years the Global Poverty Project has placed itself at the centre of the End of Polio campaign and the End Poverty by 2030 campaign, which have also now expanded to the United States. By demonstrating its value addition and benefit to others, the Global Poverty Project has attracted the resources it needs to expand the organization and move closer towards its goal.

macroeconomic evidence. For example, in Moldova UN Women is working in partnership with UNDP to undertake national statistical strengthening—including professional communications products that have been used by policy makers to interpret and incorporate time-use data—and at the global level through the work with UNSD on the EDGE indicator set.

Conclusion 3: With the right alliances, UN Women could reinvigorate the quest for future economic models, bringing gender-responsive empirical evidence and action research into mainstream economic debates.

UN Women's current strategic approach results in a close link between its effectiveness and the resource base it can mobilize. This limits the entity's scope for scaling up impact and achieving critical mass behind policy positions. While the structural funding gap creates real challenges, a strong organizational focus on levels of funding is obscuring other options for leveraging impact and creating several negative narratives.

At the core of UN Women's future ability to affect change, regardless of the amount of resources that it can mobilize, is the set of partnerships and alliances that it can forge. Operationally, UN Women will, for the foreseeable future, always have limited resources and capacity to lead large programmes. Its impact will depend on working in concert with other partners through joint programming and providing high quality technical inputs to engender economic models and EE programmes.

4.2 EFFECTIVENESS

Conclusion 4: UN Women's normative mandate has enabled it to effectively influence international discourse and standards and a range of national policies despite having limited resources.

By implementing lessons learned from supporting the CSW, UN Women has successfully intensified its involvement at the normative level, enabling it to effectively influence international discourse around issues such as unpaid care work, domestic workers, home-based workers, women migrant workers and rural women. As a priority, this approach can continue to support inclusion of WEE in the SDGs.

Progress has also been made in supporting countries to embed normative standards into national laws. Scope now remains for translating more of the global normative results into positive changes at the country level and to ensure that knowledge, experiences and best practices from the field are used to inform global processes.

While examples of using evidence from the field in intergovernmental normative work do exist, these have been limited and ad hoc. Similarly, while many UN Women field staff are knowledgeable about normative standards for EE at the international level, they require more guidance and technical support to translate this into concrete policy action and implementation at the country level.

As a consequence of its coordination mandate, UN Women is already strategically placed to focus on the partnerships that it has with UNDP, UNCTAD, and UNDESA so that their programmes truly address structural bottlenecks to WEE. The entity's operational relationships with academic institutions, OHCHR, feminist economists and civil society advisory groups are promising avenues for bringing increased levels and quality of human rights-based economic analysis and evidence to the table in work with the Bretton Woods institutions.

Conclusion 5: Coordination and joint programming have made a cautious but important contribution to advancing WEE within the UN system, especially at the country level. There is both demand and opportunity for UN Women to leverage this into leadership of convening and facilitating the WEE community.

UN Women has rightly approached its coordination mandate at both the global and country level with a degree of caution, based on its appreciation of its own emerging capacity and acknowledgement of the roles that have previously been played by other UN agencies.

At the global and country level, the SWAP is recognized by other UN agencies as a major contribution to coordination. While no specific mechanism exists for coordinating WEE at the global level, there is also a strong case for avoiding additional layers of coordination mechanisms. A more promising approach looks to be a combination of existing fora, a WEE community of practice, and guidance on using the gender scorecards to promote accountability in relation to WEE.

UN Women's leadership and role in existing coordination fora (such as IANWGE at the HQ level and the UN resident coordinator system and UNDAF working groups at the country level) is already producing important results in terms of an increased number of joint programmes and initiatives and UNDAFs that are effectively gender-responsive. UN Women staff see the

entity's results in engendering UNDAFs, including in the area of WEE, as one of its organizational strengths.

The evaluation found that, at the country level, UN Women staff have to prioritize their coordination efforts between the UN country team and the wider national WEE space (normally through the ministries of gender). There tends to be few synergies between these fora. Thus, while UN Women's disciplined interpretation of its coordination mandate to focus on the UN system has contributed to its effectiveness in terms on UNDAF, the wider principle of coordination is not yet being fully realized.

Analysis of UN Women comparative advantages finds that it has significant expertise in convening and facilitating multi-stakeholder groups. Combined with a strong demand for it to assume a leadership position in relation to broader coordination of WEE efforts, there is a strong case for the entity to take a more inclusive approach to its coordination role by creating platforms for participatory dialogue and collaboration.

Conclusion 6: The principle means by which UN Women can enhance its effectiveness is through its partnerships. Becoming more strategic and selective will be critical.

The effectiveness of UN Women operational work is correlated with the level of resources that it has. In reality, however, there is very limited scope for planning based on raising large increases in financial resources, especially within the structurally underfunded gender equality sector. Doing so also places UN Women in direct competition with the very organizations with which it is seeking to build alliances.

For these reasons, partnerships offer a more sustainable and scalable route to extending UN Women capacity. They can also help build the capacity of the sector overall. While it is promising to see increased instances of partnerships in support of WEE (particularly through the Knowledge Gateway and the post-2015 process), UN Women also needs to be more strategic and selective in ensuring that the parameters, expectations and contributions of its partnerships are clearly defined.

The organization is already learning that different types of partnerships require different modes of thinking, including when they relate to different thematic areas. For example, a private sector partnership in relation to EE carries with it different characteristics and considerations than when it relates to ending violence against women. Developing a model for strategically disaggregating and prioritizing partnerships in relation to WEE will be an important step for the organization to take.

Conclusion 7: UN Women operational work makes the most effective contribution where it identifies and addresses structural barriers and bottlenecks to women's realization of their economic and social rights.

A great deal of UN Women micro-level work is currently designed to solve economic problems faced by women—provide direct access to better skills, credit products, market opportunities, information and other services. This has provided some inspiring examples of women gaining confidence, assets and a sense of control over their lives. But, the approach is also highly limited in terms of the scale it can reach, the dimensions of empowerment that can be affected, and the extent to which it differentiates UN Women (or not) from other actors.

Much has been learned from this work, including through the FGE. But the limited scope for impact in comparison to operational work at the meso- and macro-levels suggest that the time has come to revise the approach: micro-level work needs to sit within a bigger picture and contribute evidence towards shifting structural bottlenecks to WEE.

This suggests that UN Women should be highly selective in its micro-level work and focus strongly on how it will provide evidence and data about structural barriers to women's realization of their economic and social rights. For example, shifting away from using UN funds to supporting individual women's access to finance and focusing instead on supporting women at the collective level to address bottlenecks that deny women economic opportunities, independent decision-making or control of assets.

4.3 GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Conclusion 8: Women’s economic, social and cultural rights stand in a disadvantaged position to the dominant political economic paradigm. In this context, UN Women needs to mobilize and give voice to all the allies it can—including men, civil society and the private sector—from the position of legal authority that human rights frameworks provide.

To a certain degree, a dilemma exists within UN Women about whether or not to explicitly use HRBAs and heterodox economics to try to gain traction within the global economic system. The evaluation has found that UN Women’s recent shift towards a rights-based approach for its work on WEE (which approaches WEE in terms of constraints and discrimination) positions the entity well to add value to other existing efforts in this area.

Evidence within lessons learned from UN Women COs indicate how important it is to articulate rights-based approaches as a contribution to economic debate rather than as a conflict between different paradigms:

advocating change explicitly through the lens of women’s economic rights but accompanying this with data on the orthodox economic effects of such policies.

Given the challenges that UN Women has faced in articulating and communicating a coherent notion of WEE based on human development and freedom concepts, and the commitment to HRBAs in the UN system, it may be useful for the entity to re-frame its work in terms of women’s economic and social rights.

Evidence from UN Women operational work suggests that the realization of women’s economic and social rights needs to include strengthening rights-holding groups to better organize, document and voice their positions in national processes (and by supporting the collection of data that can verify the effects of various policies on WEE). The organization has also recognized that increased engagement with men and boys is needed at a country level in order to increase understanding and cultural support for women’s economic rights.

4.4 ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Conclusion 9: During its transition phase, UN Women undertook intentional efforts to focus outwards and engage with and begin influencing its wider network and environment. To enhance its institutional ability to contribute to WEE, there is now a need to consolidate inwards and strengthen a consistent approach to WEE-related leadership at all levels within the organization.

It has taken UN Women almost four years to begin the process of inclusively mapping out a comprehensive TOC for WEE. This is due to several factors, including internal transition, constrained human resources (including time), and an extremely challenging external context (including resistance to a rights-based approach and competing economic philosophies). As a consequence, UN Women capacity and experience in WEE is now highly distributed across the organization, but not yet joined up into a cohesive

whole. Nevertheless, there is positive movement with recent processes, including the internal and external consultations, and a TOC workshop.

The evaluation found that one of women’s comparative advantages is its motivated and passionate staff, who are technical experts in their area. There is now a need for the increased priority given to WEE to be matched by resources to build up capacity of UN Women staff in this area (at all levels of the organization) and to develop corporate guidance through inclusive and open internal processes. UN Women work at the policy and normative level provides a good example of how strong technical staff can contribute effectively to WEE in a resource-constrained environment.

The new regional architecture, particularly the new WEE advisers (once in place in all regions), provides

a valuable in-house resource for the organization to address capacity gaps (particularly in terms of providing substantive expertise on WEE, including to COs that lack such expertise) and support efforts to achieve greater strategic coherence. They can also play an important role in supporting increased linkages between normative and operational work on WEE, in particular by channelling up to HQ areas where COs need further guidance and support to implement norms and standards and in transmitting evidence/examples where COs have supported the implementation of norms and standards.

4.5 LESSONS LEARNED

Conclusion 10: UN Women has generated a wealth of evidence and multiple knowledge management initiatives. The time has come to integrate these efforts into a systemic approach that enables the organization to realize the promise of its three mandates.

UN Women has created some strong research and knowledge products for the external audience in relation to WEE. Furthermore, the Knowledge Gateway has played an important role in providing a global platform to facilitate experience-based knowledge exchange about WEE between international organizations, CSOs, the private sector and women entrepreneurs seeking to enhance WEE. It has also enabled UN Women to expand and diversify its network of partners.

There is an acute awareness within the organization of the importance of internal knowledge management, and a real intention to deliver this function. However, current efforts are largely fragmented, partial, and ad hoc. For example, DRFs are used consistently and strongly throughout the organization, but do not link to the TOC for WEE or to human rights indicators (including process indicators), and the developers of the Knowledge Gateway were unable to arrange for

To make the most of this human resource capacity, the organization requires a shared leadership culture at all levels of the organization in order to further advance its work on WEE: providing strong overall direction for work on WEE while enabling technical autonomy for experts. Top-down leadership styles are likely to crush motivation and innovation in an organization with the characteristics of UN Women. At the same time, mechanisms are required to allow multidisciplinary teams to form and work across the thematic areas as WEE programming works best when it is holistic and integrated with other areas of women's lives.

the UN Women Training Centre open module to be hosted on the Knowledge Gateway.

While the Knowledge Gateway has provided an important forum for exchange of experience among external actors, more specific mechanisms and tools need to be developed to support internal organizational learning on WEE through the sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned. In particular, there is scope to continue the integration of the FGE into UN Women's primary systems, and to begin drawing on the evidence generated by UN system WEE projects.

It is the view of the evaluation that the knowledge management function sits at the centre of UN Women's ability to integrate and maximize the benefit of its three mandates: normative, coordination and operational. In relation to WEE, it is the lack of a coherent strategy for knowledge management that is hindering the organization from realizing this comparative advantage. The knowledge function is also the most promising avenue for UN Women to engage with its universal mandate as the guidance provided through the intergovernmental function has already demonstrated.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The approach taken by this evaluation has been to emphasize gender-responsive and human rights-based principles. In accordance with this, the evaluation emphasizes that the decisions about what UN Women should or should not do in the future, and the prerogative for privileging the knowledge that influences such decisions, belong to the organization.

During the final consultation stage, the evaluation identified five decisions that the evidence recommends are critical for UN Women's future contribution to WEE. These are significant decisions, some of which transcend WEE and therefore require input and involvement across all levels of the organization. Following a comprehensive consultation with the evaluation reference groups, and an assessment of the current utilization needs of the organization, these recommended decisions have been revised to reflect—in the view of the evaluation—the strategic option that the evidence most strongly supports.

It is important to emphasize that, while it is the view of the evaluation that the recommended actions are those that are most supported by the evidence, universal agreement on these directions does not yet exist within the organization, and an inclusive process of shared decision-making is required in relation to all five recommendations.

In supporting the organization to reach and implement the five recommended decisions, the evaluation has articulated two-levels of time-phased actions. Within each set of actions, implications of choosing to make and not make the recommended decisions are identified (including related to resources, capacity and other factors):

- a) Short-term actions are both *immediate* and based on helping the organization improve in regard to the path that it is *already following*. These actions target the global, regional and country level.
- b) Mid-term actions are *transformative* ones that the evidence suggests are necessary if the organization

decides, at a *corporate level*, to move in the direction that the evidence in this evaluation supports. UN Women should consider these actions as part of the mid-term review of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.

Recommended Decision 1: The mission of UN Women is best served by moving decisively into the macro-economic space.

Based on relevance—Findings 1-13 and Conclusions 1-3

In theory, UN Women's mandates mean that it is well placed to contribute directly to the macroeconomic space. While the organization has made some contributions to macroeconomic policy development, both at the country and global level, it is not currently an organizational comparative advantage. Cognizant of this fact, many UN Women activities are cautious in terms of fully engaging with this area of work. Nevertheless, as UN Women's current strategic intention acknowledges, and this evaluation supports, the organization can make a considerable contribution to addressing the structural barriers to women's economic and social rights at a meso- and macro-level.

The main implications of not moving decisively into the macroeconomic arena are likely to be significantly reduced opportunities to leverage transformative change in WEE at the country level, or partnerships with UN economic entities and IFIs at the regional and global level. However, it also avoids the need to build specific capacity of the entity in macroeconomics, which implies the need for a level of additional investment (discussed below).

Short-term actions

At the global, regional and country level, UN Women is advised to:

- a) Further strengthen its working partnerships with UN economic actors in order to address structural barriers to women's economic and social rights through meso- and macro-level policy interventions. This could include efforts by UN Women to expand

and deepen relationships with UNCTAD, ILO, UNDP and UNDESA, building on joint work in statistics and human rights and gender-responsive macroeconomic policy research. In doing so, UN Women can continue the focus on the macroeconomic conditions and policies required to promote decent work and includes increased efforts by UN Women to align its work on WEE with emerging labour market trends. It may also include policies to promote institutional change, such as in rules on land titling and women's access to credit.

- b) Strengthen its coordination and cooperation with UNDESA, UNCTAD and UNDP around macroeconomic work. At the country level, this should be largely meso-level work focused on engendering national development plans and poverty reduction strategies, including the statistical and budget monitoring systems that support them.

At the HQ and regional level, UN Women is advised to:

- a) Provide the necessary policy guidance and support (in terms of training, continuous knowledge and practice exchange) and clear strategic leadership to enable micro-level work, including through the FGE, to more directly link to meso-level interventions and ongoing macroeconomic work that is aimed at addressing structural change and barriers to women's economic rights.
- b) Support COs (in advance of the next UNDAF and Delivering as One programming cycles) to further strengthen their capacity and knowledge to position their meso-level work to become a means to ensure that engendered macroeconomic and other macro-level policies (such as those regarding public investment, trade, capital flows, and foreign direct investment) are subsequently implemented.

At the regional and country level, UN Women is advised to consider the following areas for increased meso-level engagement through partnerships with other relevant organizations:

- a) Supporting the development of macroeconomic policies to promote job creation and women's

access to employment through policies to reduce or redistribute their care burden

- b) Supporting efforts to investigate the role of public infrastructure spending to reduce women's care burden
- c) Exploring methods (including alternative central bank policies) to engender monetary policy and credit access for women
- d) Working with other partners to provide analysis of the gender effects of macroeconomic policy at the country level
- e) Supporting the development of gender-responsive fiscal (including tax) policy
- f) Supporting the development of gender-responsive industrial policies that supports wage growth and decent work
- g) Working in partnership with other relevant organizations to accelerate female-led MSME growth
- h) Ensuring the long-term viability of community-level businesses by supporting relevant actors to provide sustained access to financial services (working capital and savings)
- i) Supporting government and other relevant actors to engender national business and economic statistics and statistical systems
- j) Supporting the collective agency (self-help) of women's groups and communities

The immediate implications of making a concerted move into the macroeconomic space is the need to "ring-fence" and assure time for the macroeconomic specialists in the EE Section to work on guidance materials. This requires a reduction in management tasks (some of which will be achieved through the forthcoming appointment of ahead of section), and an improved system for managing and reducing requests from senior managers for talking points from

specialist staff (for example, UNDESA operates such a system—storing a database of previous responses).

At the country and regional level, an immediate implication is to prioritize macroeconomic skills and experience in the normal country and regional office recruitment of staff members, and in the invitations made to civil society advisory group members. This capacity can be supported further with an internal macroeconomics orientation training (jointly conducted by EE Section supported by UN Women Training Centre) for selected CO staff from the 53 country teams engaged in WEE, implying a one-off additional cost that will require appropriate estimation by EE Section.

Mid-term actions

Following a final decision in the mid-term review, at the HQ level, UN Women would be advised to:

- a) Over the medium-term and in the context of the mid-term review of the 2014-217 Strategic Plan, determine the extent to which it plans to move into and equip itself to engage with debate, dialogue, advising, action and advocacy in the macroeconomic space. Within this decision, the entity needs to decide if addressing the structural barriers to women's economic and social rights through macro-level policy influence will become the centrepiece of UN Women's future WEE strategy and to what extent it intends to take a concerted attempt to engender mainstream economic models and policy. This should be partly framed by considering what is required to be fit-for-purpose under the emerging prosperity cluster of the SDGs. The process of making this decision should be an inclusive one, involving all levels of the organization, as all members of staff will need to get behind such a strategic direction to make it effective.
- b) Increase its influence through building on strategic partnerships and lead an alliance to advocate the value and importance of a rights-based approach in macroeconomic policy discussions and interventions. In doing so, UN Women should build on its relationships with the human rights-based

economic agencies in the UN system and those whose work emphasizes macro-level analysis. UN Women engages strongly with the Bretton Woods institutions and continues to draw on academic and evidence-based research from its network partners and add packaged action research from its COs.

Following a final decision in the mid-term review, at the country level, UN Women would be advised to:

- a) Build on HQ's macroeconomic influence and macro-level policies by identifying appropriate areas on which to engage with governments on meso-level interventions. The focus of COs will depend on the economic structure of a country and the gender division of labour between productive and unpaid activities.¹¹⁰ A role for COs could be to work with line ministries and ministries of finance to integrate gender analysis into their planning and identification of projects. While the portfolio of each CO could differ, a unifying theme could be promoting the conditions required for women to improve their economic condition—whether it is through access to productive and financial resources, social insurance or work conditions.
- b) Use its links to the women's movement to build working relationships with women's impact investment networks and over time (as its expertise increases and once the regional WEE advisers are in place) begin to deepen engagement with key economic actors—such as UNCDF and regional

¹¹⁰ We offer several examples to illustrate this. In a number of sub-Saharan countries, women lack access to credit due to restrictions on their right to own land and lack of collateral. Alternatives include government loan guarantees, which can lower the cost of borrowing and expand access to credit. Similarly, in agricultural economies (in sub-Saharan Africa as well as South Asia and other regions), extension services often bypass women; non-traditional agricultural exports employ women, often as part-time workers at low wages. In both cases, COs could engage in promotion of policies at the government level to improve women's access to services and improve pay and work conditions. Because women are time poor, a reduction of their unpaid labour burden will have significant impacts on their ability to generate a livelihood. Public spending on physical infrastructure—e.g., clean water, roads, rural health clinics—can improve WEE. One final example is the importance of national policies on social security, social insurance, and work-family balance (such as maternity leave). COs could potentially play a role by advocating for such policies to be engendered and gender equalizing.

development banks. This work could advocate for capital investment for medium and large-scale projects that generate decent employment in rural areas, and promote the growth of medium and large scale women's enterprises. Using lessons gained from its country-level work to support women entrepreneurs (in particular through the FGE), UN Women could also contribute constructively to help transform the lending practices of IFIs.

Of the recommended decisions made by the evaluation, the mid-term changes required under Recommendation 1 imply the most significant allocation of additional resources—with a per annum increase that can largely be estimated based on standard human resource budgeting recommendations for professional positions. This could include the recruitment of two additional macroeconomists to the EE Section and one to each main regional office (with sufficient budgets for travel to countries also secured). Other costs are likely to include participation in—and sponsorship of—macroeconomic network events, conferences and publications. Learning from project funding models, such as Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Programme in South Africa, additional macroeconomic expertise at the country level can initially be included in specific project proposals and budgets.

Another implication of this decision is the need for a staff member in the Strategic Partnerships Division to be appointed (and recognized by other parts of the entity) as the main relationship coordinator for World Bank and other IFIs. Further, a disciplined process is required to reduce the number of and deepen the remaining strategic partnerships (see also Recommendation 2), with non-priority partners encouraged to engage through the Knowledge Gateway rather than directly with UN Women offices of the EE Section.

Recommended Decision 2: UN Women should provide clarity on its commitment to taking up the mantle and responsibility of leading through partnership.

Based on effectiveness—Findings 14-31, Conclusions 4-7
In the face of significant odds, UN Women has made some substantive contributions to WEE—particularly at the normative level through the post-2015 process, and its regional and country-level policy work. Based on its DRFs, the organization is achieving many of its goals. In the future, the ambition of the goals in a future DRF could be increased if the entity were also to account for the impact it can leverage through its strategic partnerships.

For any organization facing a challenge as large as women's economic disempowerment, there will always be difficulty in setting a vision and goals that are both sufficiently ambitious and yet realistic. While the resource base for WEE is likely to remain restricted for the foreseeable future, the evaluation has highlighted that UN Women could work through its partnerships to expand the reach, strength and impact of its work. Doing so would allow the results framework to be significantly more ambitious by including within the strategic planning process the potential reach and impact of working through partnerships.

The evaluation has proposed that increased efforts are needed to understand and maximize the value position of UN Women partnerships, including through a well-articulated advocacy strategy for WEE that civil society can rally behind. Better leveraging of UN Women's convening role can further expand its influence in the WEE domain and solidly position the entity as a representative, champion and broker for other organizations that have comparative advantage in WEE.

At the moment, the evaluation found that the wider gender equality sector is still watching and waiting to see whether or not UN Women is going to compete with them for a limited resource base. Considering the centrality of the current narrative of structural underfunding within UN Women to its strategic thinking,

the evaluation recommends that a clear decision be made regarding what kind of partner UN Women wants to be for the sector.

The implication of not addressing this need for clarity is to leave the organization uncertain as to how many and what type of partnerships it needs to develop—risking the continuation of an ad hoc and opportunistic approach that is suited to a start-up phase but is likely to be unsustainable (in terms of spreading-to-thin) over the longer term. It also contributes to a difference between a theory-of-change that takes into account the leverage the entity can have through partners and a set of strategic plan goals that are carefully limited only to what the entity is confident it can achieve through its own capacity.

Short-term actions

At the HQ-level, UN Women is advised to:

- a) Map all of its existing and potential partners for WEE, and identify the strategic advantages (according to its TOC) of working with each of the partners. The Strategic Partnerships Division and the EE Section should work together to lead a participatory internal process to develop a disaggregated framework of different types of partners, and a model decision-making process for which partnerships to focus on with different objectives.
- b) Support regional offices and COs to apply this tool to their own contexts.
- c) Lead and support the development of a shared understanding across the entity about its aim and approach to partnerships with the private sector. This should be supported by a participatory organizational review of UN Women’s private sector engagement (including re-definition of the current private sector strategy and terms of reference for the PSLAC). This effort could also inform the development of a holistic strategy clearly articulating UN Women’s objectives, priorities, key performance indicators and value proposition connected with its private sector partnerships, including how such partnerships will be effectively leveraged to

advance WEE. A clear “firewall” should be established between substantive engagement with the private sector to advance WEE and resource mobilization efforts within the strategy and organizational positioning. UN Women could then start disaggregating the private sector in a clear, consistent and useful way—with a different objective for each group and message for each audience.

- d) Equip country teams with increased knowledge, resources and specific guidance to provide effective implementation of the system-wide coordination mandate, better positioning UN Women to exert greater influence in attracting and convening partners and actors working in the area of EE.

At the global, regional and country level, UN Women is advised to:

- a) Focus and deepen its UN system-wide coordination and partnerships with organizations that can have a catalytic role in support of its work on WEE. As greater trust, familiarity and practice of working with each other develops, UN Women should channel more of this operational work through these partners (such as the economic agencies within the UN system and ILO).
- b) Increasingly use IANWGE and UNDAF to convene, coordinate and mobilize UN system-wide efforts in relation to WEE contribute expertise and knowledge to support UN agencies to effectively engender their work on EE.
- c) Consider moving away from implementing all programmes directly, and focus on developing platforms and funding windows for donors where partners can come together in order to maximize their joint impact. Related to this, UN Women should avoid the temptation to do everything and use opportunities such as Beijing +20 and post-2015 to convene, represent and promote the wider WEE sector.
- d) As new areas of interest emerge, such as vocational education and training, climate change, and sexual and reproductive health, UN Women should seek out work of other agencies (such as UNICEF, UNFPA,

UNESCO and UNEP) to support, in terms of both technical inputs and advocating on their behalf. Over time, donors will begin to see UN Women as a trusted broker that can reduce the transaction costs for them in identifying work to support. The evaluation proposes that this will result in more resources being attracted to the sector and channelled through UN Women, enabling greater cost recovery and addressing the structural funding gap for UN Women's own work.¹¹¹

At the country level, UN Women is advised to:

- a) Continue and strengthen its key role in ensuring that WEE is mainstreamed within UNDAF and programmatic work of UN agencies where relevant.
- b) Report on specific coordination results in relation to WEE so that progress related to UN Women's coordination mandate can be clearly monitored and evaluated over time.

The immediate implication of clarifying a partnership-based approach to working is a need for staff or consultant time to map out existing partnerships and time for the Strategic Partnerships Division, the EE Section and country staff to collaborate on developing an agreed partnership segmentation and prioritisation framework. In addition to this, specific coordination capacity development is required at the country level to support the emergence of this role as a professional skill set with UN Women (with cross-over benefits for partnership development).¹¹²

The major opportunity cost implied by this decision is the investment of time—primarily at the country

¹¹¹ Based on the current cost recovery formulation and comments provided by PPGU, the evaluation estimates that one additional professional staff member could be added for approximately each 4 million U.S. dollars additional resource channelled to the sector through UN Women (this estimate needs to be subject to a full and detailed cost analysis). The feasibility of this business model would need to be considered in depth, with the option considered of a special increased level of cost recovery applied to arrangements in which UN Women is acting as a broker.

¹¹² The evaluation notes that a corporate evaluation of the coordination function is ongoing, which will make more detailed an concrete recommendations with regard to coordination capacity development.

level, but with implications at other levels—in joint programming processes. These were observed by the evaluation as being ongoing in nature and often highly intensive, especially for senior staff. However, the evaluation also found that there is a strong commitment to joint programming throughout the culture of UN Women, and thus proposes that the implications of a decision to work through more defined partnerships are unlikely to be significantly different from what will be attempted in any case.

Mid-term actions

Following a final decision in the mid-term review, at a global and country level, UN Women would be advised to:

- a) Identify major structural blockages within the economic system where competing interests of major constituents are a barrier to making common progress on women's economic and social rights (for example, the relationship between corporations and trade unions). Building on its existing experience and comparative advantage in convening and facilitation, UN Women should develop a specialist and intensive process that brings these competing stakeholders into dialogue with each other for a concentrated period of time.
- b) Run dialogue processes by bringing together disparate actors (for example extractive industries, government, financiers, rights activists and local residents) into conversation in order to build relationships and a mutual plan of action. Such efforts could start with a specific issue or structural blockage to women's economic and social rights. To address longer-term relationships UN Women could further maximize its convening role by bringing together its civil society, private sector, and trade union partners into a single platform for dialogue.
- c) Ensure that outcomes from these dialogue processes are used to inform the development of new economic models and tools that can be shared more widely.
- d) Fundraise specifically for its technical services, facilitation and monitoring follow-up of commitments,

once private sector and government stakeholders have a clear understanding of the value of UN Women's convening and facilitating role for their relationships with communities. Such efforts could be aimed at both achieving WEE objectives and (potentially) generating an additional source of income. Examples of changed behaviour and practices emerging from these dialogues should be subjected to impact evaluation, with the evidence collected being used to advocate for stronger responses to WEE among other member states and private stakeholders.

For the next strategic planning process, the implication of the decision is a commitment to building the capacity of COs in coordination—particularly in regard to the provision of dedicated staff members for this function. With regard to the option for strategic dialogue processes, the implications are a need for an up-front investment to develop a feasibility study, business model and dialogue process (including identifying and orientating facilitators). The cost of the processes themselves can be charged to the participants themselves.

Recommended Decision 3: UN Women work on WEE should explicitly be based on, and guided by, a rights-based approach.

Based on integration of gender equality and human rights—Findings 32-36, Conclusion 8

The nature of knowledge, and which sources of knowledge get privileged, is a major challenge in relation to WEE. UN Women's role places it at the intersection of several powerful traditions, including human rights, feminism and orthodox economics. This creates tensions (sometimes healthy, sometimes not) and discontinuities within the approach of different people and parts of the organization.

Even with a renewed WEE strategy, different parts of the organization will inevitably continue to lead on different pieces of work relating to WEE. Each will need to continuously interpret incoming signals and translate these into new knowledge for action. No

strategy can predict what all these different issues will be, nor provide guidance on what knowledge should be privileged in each situation.

The evaluation proposes that an effective resolution to this dilemma is to establish a common approach that is institutionalized within UN Women and forms the basis of all future knowledge generation. It is therefore recommended that a clear decision is made, and guidance provided, on what UN Women's core values are in relation to interpreting the world relating to WEE.

The implication of not making a clear decision on using human rights as a philosophical basis for its work on WEE is that each incoming staff member needs to interpret the definition of WEE and identify pathways of action based on her or his own intellectual background. While this does allow a great degree of space for all parties to talk about WEE and avoid conflict, it has a significant cost in terms of weak consistency across the entity (both internally and in the vision articulated to partners).

Short-term actions

At global, regional and country levels, UN Women is advised to:

- a) Continue to apply a rights-based approach to WEE internally (focused on economic and social rights), and openly in existing fora where it is the norm, such as intergovernmental work. Internal guidance and capacity development support (including in the form of training and practical guidelines) are developed by the Policy and Programme Section to enable regional and COs to further deepen their understanding and capacity to effectively and systematically apply a HRBA to work on WEE.
- b) Support increased knowledge and capacity of COs to systematically apply a HRBA and ensure that operational work is designed to support implementation of normative commitments and recommendations emanating from relevant human rights treaty bodies, human rights experts and special rapporteurs.

c) Continue to scale up normative and coordination efforts, with a shift towards a greater focus on a rights-based approach where it can exert more influence as a thought leader, advocate and knowledge hub in advancing WEE. At the country level, this can include integrating a rights-based approach to WEE within the UNDAF process and also offering technical support and advice to relevant UNCT agencies to advance this approach in their programming. As part of an approach to becoming a thought-leader, UN Women can retarget its WEE programming in terms of participatory action research—pioneering new approaches to reach forgotten groups while generating evidence, for example, in high risk and innovative areas. For example, FGE grants are used to support participatory research on WEE in extremely vulnerable groups that are excluded from current national development plans or UN economic programmes, with the evidence generated being tied to specific advocacy strategies by COs at the meso- and macro-level.

At global and regional levels, UN Women is advised to:

a) Expand its engagement with a wider range of human rights treaty and intergovernmental bodies beyond CEDAW and CSW in order to advance application of a rights-based approach to WEE. These include the ILO, HRC, the UN Special Rapporteurs and relevant working groups such as the HRC Working Group on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business.

The immediate implications of a reorientation of WEE to specifically centre on human rights is the need for an internal organizational communications strategy for all relevant staff members on the HRBA to WEE. At the global level it implies time being made available for the EE Section to engage more strongly with the HRC, and at the country level it implies stronger integration between FGE grant making and UN Women CO policy and coordination plans.

Mid-term actions

Following a final decision in the mid-term review, at the HQ level, UN Women would be advised to:

a) Reframe its work on WEE in terms of women’s economic and social rights, and rename the thematic area accordingly. All the economic work of the organization could be framed and articulated in terms of a rights-based approach first (with other arguments made second, e.g., economic arguments that support the primary HRBA case). In adopting this approach, there should be increased attention to understanding and unpacking the underlying causes of disempowerment, inequalities and discrimination, including structural barriers to women’s economic and social rights and participation in the productive workforce. Knowledge and information about these structural barriers should be used to inform the design and implementation of programming at a broader policy level within each country.

b) Strive to gain greater influence within the UN system by developing advanced human rights and gender-responsive evaluation and data capabilities. This could also include supporting joint UN processes, such as common country assessments, UNDAF reviews, and joint programme evaluations. UN Women could also work in partnership with UNICEF to strengthen national monitoring capacity through real-time approaches to monitoring the outcomes from gender-responsive budgeting.

The mid-term implications of a shift to a HRBA-first approach to WEE are to reframe and reissue major communications on WEE, both internally and externally. This will need to include equipping staff at all levels with knowledge of how to explain the approach—and its implications—to partners with varying degrees of knowledge and acceptance. Longer term, the approach implies a degree of quality assurance and support (possibly through the helpdesk in Recommendation 4 and 5) to support country teams at the planning stage to implement an economic rights “lens”.

Recommended Decision 4: UN Women needs to strengthen leadership across the organization in order to support work on WEE.

Based on organizational efficiency—Findings 37-32, Conclusion 9

Leadership is something that is exercised at all levels of an organization. The approach to leadership, and the support that is given to emerging leaders to enhance their leadership skills, is critical to the success of technical work that takes place under this leadership. Furthermore, “good” leadership is not automatic and requires continuous personal development over time. While it is a wider organizational issue than just WEE, effectiveness in WEE cannot be meaningfully disentangled from the implications of internal leadership capabilities.

The evaluation found different leadership styles, approaches and skills being applied to WEE throughout the organization. This inconsistency in leadership culture and skill, combined with a complex and turbulent external situation, makes the boundaries of personal autonomy and accountability unclear for many staff members engaged in WEE. The result is excessive adversity to taking risk, defensive behaviours, and gaps in communication. The evaluation proposes that it is appropriate, therefore, to recommend that a clear position is taken with regard to developing leadership culture and capacity in UN Women.

The implication of not defining a leadership approach for WEE within the entity is that staff members working on this thematic area have inconsistent and unclear structures of responsibility and boundaries of autonomy—leading to an adversity to taking risks (which are essential to finding solutions to intransigent problems such as economic marginalisation) and low internal empowerment within the entity.

Short-term actions

At the HQ level, the senior management team within UN Women is advised to:

- a) Agree and put in place an effective and continuous leadership development programme for UN Women staff members that is tailored to the unique culture and requirements of UN Women. Since the work of the organization is concerned with promoting women’s empowerment, concepts of empowerment (such as guided mastery and self efficacy) heavily influence this programme. The values and standards of UN Women’s leadership culture should be communicated heavily within the organization, so that staff members come to reasonably expect that leaders at all levels—from individual projects to the Executive Director—are accountable to a consistent organizational approach to leadership.
- b) Ensure that intellectual and executive leadership of WEE is steadily returned to the EE Section within the Policy Division. However, this leadership should be practiced in such a way as to maintain the capacity and the autonomy that has been established elsewhere in the organization over the past three years. This could manifest in terms of increased focus on responding to the needs of country and regional offices in relation to their EE programming (through a mechanism such as a helpdesk.)¹¹³
- c) Provide the EE Section with sufficient time and resources to develop practical and needs-based

¹¹³ Helpdesks are typically designed as a single-point of contact to troubleshoot problems or provide guidance (e.g., in relation to WEE programming at the country level). Off-the-shelf software solutions are available to manage incoming requests through a queue/ticket system. Large helpdesks are often arranged into levels of support, with users encouraged to self-serve their needs before requesting individual responses. Level 1 is often a frequently asked questions or knowledge base that is continuously updated based on requests for help that are most often received. Where an appropriate answer cannot be found, requests are then elevated to the service team to answer (e.g., the EE Section). Many corporations now operate an intermediate level where answers are sought from other community members (e.g., UN Women staff members in other countries) through question and answer forums. Value for the organization is derived not only from reacting to requests for assistance, but also in promoting communication between users and identifying emerging trends.

corporate guidance and knowledge sharing tools based on the active participation of staff members at all levels of the organization. Specific areas where greater policy advice and guidance on technical issues is needed from HQ should be addressed, including: gender equality and decent work, gender equality and social protection, and engendering statistics.

- d) Support the development of a clear vision, strategic focus, and TOC for UN Women work on WEE that enables the EE Section and Executive Director's Office to ensure that a common institutional direction is communicated throughout the organization.
- e) Establish internal processes and mechanisms to allow for the concepts behind WEE to evolve—including for disagreements to be aired openly and constructively—in order to help avoid the disruption that has characterized recent changes.

The central implications acting on the need for leadership are the time requirements from the human resource and senior management teams to agree and lead the development of a leadership training programme for staff members engaged in WEE. It also requires that time is “ring-fenced” (by being built into work plans) for staff members from different HQ business units to regularly interact and communicate. More efficient management of ad hoc requests for talking points (see also Recommended decision 1), and the deployment of helpdesk software to track and manage technical support requests from EE Section (off-the-shelf solutions would cost around 3,000 U.S. dollars per year—see Recommended decision 5), could support this.

Mid-term actions

Following a final decision in the mid-term review, at the HQ, regional and country level, UN Women would be advised to:

- a) Move away from seeking programme models that can be applied across its portfolio, and instead adopt a highly participatory and gender-responsive approach to its work. This should focus on

enabling self-organizing local networks, both internally and externally. This could be supported through the codification of heuristics (loosely defined guiding principles), values and processes that define UN Women's unique approach to addressing WEE through tailor-made strategies for each context. In other words, the organization could create a toolbox that a CO can use to facilitate networks of stakeholders to design local solutions for WEE at different levels and in different contexts.

- b) Ensure that space is made within the organization for multidisciplinary teams to form and collaborate on shared tasks—for example, through a joint mission combining governance, protection, economic and country specialists to migrant destination countries (such as United Arab Emirates, Japan, Spain or the United Kingdom) to support the development of joined up multi-country (or even multi-regional) responses to women's empowerment.

The implications of these options include the allocation of resources (time and travel costs) for joint task teams to form and work together to resolve specific problems. Time of entity staff members or consultants is also required to codify the UN Women approach to leading for WEE—which, once finished, would need to be part of the induction process for all incoming staff members.

Recommended Decision 5: UN Women needs to equip and organize itself in line with becoming a knowledge-led organization.

Based on lessons learned and good practices—Conclusion 10

The space and interest available to WEE has resulted in numerous examples of innovation, creativity and learning dispersed across UN Women. Combined with the passion of its staff for the organizational mission, there is real potential to build a dynamic and responsive organizational knowledge system.

UN Women has recognized the potential value of knowledge management as a function, and has

started several initiatives in an attempt to address this. How these different parts will be brought together into a unified system is a critical decision that needs to be made sooner rather than later.

The absence of a clear decision on the knowledge-led approach of the entity has the implication that multiple disconnected investments will continue to be made in establishing and maintaining different knowledge platforms and “brands”. While this is inefficient, however, it also currently protects the entity on over-reliance on one donor in terms of supporting the Knowledge Gateway. An implication of making this decision therefore also includes diversifying the financial support to the knowledge management function.

Short-term actions

At the HQ level, UN Women is advised to:

a) Prioritize the knowledge actions that it has already identified, including rolling out a global roster of experts, the Knowledge Gateway, and the UN Women Training Centre WEE courses to UNCTs around the world. These could be complemented with the following knowledge management offerings:

i. A daily blog on Knowledge Gateway that tracks all new developments, resources and opportunities in WEE. This blog could be staffed so as to make it the go-to source for anyone interested in WEE and to ensure that it is global and not anglo-centric through the use of regional reporters (based in regional offices). Over time, this could be run with a media partners, for example the Guardian Development Professional Network.

ii. Working with a private sector partner, to put in place a full online WEE servicedesk or helpdesk to respond to questions from country and regional offices (see also footnote in Recommendation 4). Internally, this could provide a one-stop shop for country teams to access the latest thinking on WEE, communicate with other country

teams on WEE and request specific support from the EE Section. To reduce the burden on EE Section staff of answering many of the same questions, it could also include gamification (i.e., the most active users are rewarded with points or statuses that ensure their efforts are recognized by their peers) to promote peer-to-peer support and regular synthesis of common questions into frequently asked questions.

b) Establish a collaborative task team between *PPGU* and the *Research and Data Section* to create a set of rights-based key performance indicators for UN Women contributions to WEE. These could allow CO monitoring and decentralized evaluations to capture the full range of WEE impacts. At the outcome level, the indicators should give consideration to measures of effectiveness in terms of affecting system change based on the recommendations of treaty bodies. At the impact level, the indicators could provide a means for UN Women to aggregate headline numbers of the women who have been affected by UN Women work in terms of different economic and social rights.

At a regional and country level:

a) The *WEE regional advisers* should begin to play a greater role in the knowledge system by: (i) supporting COs to influence macroeconomic policy at the country and local level; (ii) harvesting evidence and practical examples from countries and transferring this information to the global level to further inform normative work; (iii) supporting COs to link their operational and coordination work with recommendations and conclusions of treaty bodies; and (iv) assisting COs to support implementation of SDGs at the national level.

b) COs should begin designing projects and programmes so as to generate evidence for specific normative and policy work, ensuring that strategies (such as impact evaluations) to capture and communicate these findings are included in the design and budget. These communication

products could be “pushed up” to HQ teams (including FGE and the Knowledge Gateway) and “pushed out” to other country teams through the WEE regional advisers.

The immediate implications of this decision are the need to staff a daily blog function on WEE news (potentially this could be initiated through a double internship or with the support of national committees). Deployment of dedicated helpdesk function would require initial project management support, and technical IT support to integrate off-the-shelf solutions with UN Women’s intranet and Knowledge Gateway (both Microsoft—a Knowledge Gateway partner—and Salesforce have corporate responsibility programmes that may support this for free).

In addition to the subscription to helpdesk software (estimated for EE Section at 3,000 U.S. dollars per year), time would need to be allocated for EE Section staff members to respond to requests from COs, compile frequently asked questions, and synthesize emerging trends. The immediate options also imply that time can be made available by the Research and Data Section and PPGU to work on rights-based key performance indicators (the evaluation has provided separate inputs to illustrate what these could look like).

Mid-term actions

Following a final decision in the mid-term review, at the **HQ-level**, UN Women would be advised to:

a) Elevate EmpowerWomen.org from the Knowledge Gateway into a Global Gateway—increasing the “felt presence” of the Knowledge Gateway activities, FGE activities and selected UN Women Training Centre courses by making them available through a single website. This portal could be expanded to include the addition of opportunity brokerage: helping to match donors such as private foundations with NGOs who can meet their needs and, at the same time, advance UN Women’s mission. Future rounds of the FGE could be applied for through this global gateway. In both cases, this

could create an incentive for more WEE activists and organizations to regularly visit the site. Evidence and lessons learned generated by the FGE could be communicated through the Knowledge Gateway fora, and grant holders could also be encouraged to become active members of the site.

b) Ensure that, as the centrepiece of UN Women’s knowledge strategy, the Knowledge Gateway works with the UN Women Training Centre to make its free knowledge products available on the site. As a whole, UN Women should embrace a more open approach to data and knowledge, and encourage and incentivize its staff to participate in gateway discussions. As the public face of UN Women’s knowledge strategy, the Knowledge Gateway could complement the internal helpdesk discussed under the short-term option. Behind-the-scenes, these two sites could be linked so that information can easily be elevated from the internal site to the external website.

c) Use the *internal* helpdesk/intranet site to embrace and openly acknowledge and discuss failure (as well as success) within the organization in relation to innovative approaches. Staff members should be encouraged to post examples of things that have not worked, with their explanations for what unforeseen factors caused these problems. Specific time and lines in individual’s work plans should be protected for engagement in these tasks, and this should be supported by the leadership training programme identified under Recommendation 4.

The main implication of these options are the need for strong leadership to overcome the barriers and challenges to integration, including engaging web development teams with the ability to link content from FGE and the UN Women Training Centre (and a possible helpdesk) to the Knowledge Gateway. Furthermore, the business model of the UN Women Training Centre would need to be revisited in order to make more knowledge resources available to the public free of charge.

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The international community has identified women's economic empowerment as an objective that is critical not only for achieving gender equality but also for overall development and poverty reduction. Improving the economic status of women can lead to better outcomes at the individual, family and community level, and has ripple effects across society. Research shows that women's economic empowerment affects not only the economic health of countries through increased productivity, but also overall health and well-being outcomes for the next generation. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has thus prioritized women's economic empowerment as an objective to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Office undertook this corporate evaluation to learn from the progress made so far towards achieving results, with the aim of informing future work. To what extent are UN Women interventions to support women's economic empowerment relevant, strategic and effective to move forward the women's rights agenda? How can the UN Women approach to women's economic empowerment be strengthened to better contribute to current development priorities such as poverty reduction, the post-2015 development framework and Beijing +20? How effective is UN Women engagement with key partners in this area? These are some of the questions that the evaluation addresses by analysing evidence covering all dimensions of women's economic empowerment work in UN Women—namely its mandates to support normative, operational and coordination work at the global, regional and country level.

This publication is a resource for policymakers, governments, civil society and evaluators that wish to learn from the experience of UN Women in its contribution to women's economic empowerment.