DOCUMENTING GOOD PRACTICES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Guidance Note

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UN WOMEN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

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UN WOMEN

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1.

WHAT IS A GOOD PRACTICE?

UN Women defines a Good Practice in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) as an intervention, business practice, process or methodology that is responsive to the needs of women and girls, replicable, scalable, and succeeds in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. The essence of identifying and sharing a good practice is to learn from others and to encourage the application of knowledge and experience to new situations as they relate to GEWE. A good practice need not be viewed as prescriptive; it can be adapted to meet new challenges, becoming better as improvements are discovered. We expand on this definition below in section 5.0.

2.

RATIONALE FOR THE GUIDANCE NOTE

This Guidance Note gives advice on how to document good practice interventions in the field of gender equality and women's empowerment, such that it avails holistic learning and lessons for all actors of gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women has documented a few good practices, namely, *Promoting Women's Participation in the Extractive Industries Sector – Examples of Emerging Good Practices* (UN Women, 2016)[1]; *Broadening Options for Gender Sensitive Women, Peace and Security: Appreciative Inquiry into Resources for Women's Peace and Security* which generated 11 case studies[2] and a *Catalogue of Innovations & Good Practices on Gender and Resilience in Africa.*[3] This guidance note builds from the lessons learnt from the process of developing such publications.

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1 *Promoting Women's Participation in the Extractive Industries Sector – Examples of Emerging Good Practices* (UN Women, 2016). Nairobi- Kenya

2 UN Women's Gender, Peace and Security Programme in Zimbabwe started in 2012 and focused on the following interventions: women's participation at all levels of peace and security policy making; strengthening capacities of security sector actors to respond to gender insecurities; and supporting mechanisms for peacebuilding at the community level. The initiative offers an opportunity for women to promote lasting and sustainable solutions to peace and security issues pioneered by themselves. It allows for an integrated model encompassing economic empowerment, value system analysis, shared vision, institutional and local administrative linkages.

3 The Sharefair on Gender and Resilience was attended by 235 participants from diverse parts of Africa consisting of representatives from governments, United Nations agencies, Regional Intergovernmental and Inter-parliamentary bodies, civil society organizations, private sector agencies, community-based organizations, academic and research institutes, women and girls, and experts from different countries. The Sharefair was a meeting point for stakeholders from Africa and beyond to identify problems and possible solutions using data and, where possible, predictive methods with the aim of mobilizing support and resources to incubate, accelerate, and scale effective solutions

3.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DOCUMENTING GOOD PRACTICES ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

There is a clear development case for investing in women and girls, and ensuring their access to resources. There is also a solid business case for bringing women into the heart of development in Africa. Studies have shown that investing in women is smart economics and that discrimination of women and girls has significant cost implications for any economy. Reducing the gender gap plays a critical role in poverty reduction and improved nutritional outcomes for women and girls. A recent UN study found that closing the gender gap in agricultural productivity could potentially lift as many as 238,000 people out of poverty in Malawi, 80,000 people in Tanzania, and 119,000 people in Uganda (UN Women et al. 2015)[4]. The study further contends that climate-smart approaches to agriculture could help close the gender gap and promote women's empowerment, economic development, and societal resilience to shocks. This research affirms that gender-related initiatives, such as increasing female employment opportunities and community development programmes, help reduce costs, improve efficiency, and increase the social and economic gains for women and girls.

Documentation of good practices on gender and women's empowerment helps guide all actors in developing policy, programmes and legislation that better address challenges facing women and girls. This Guidance Note on documenting good practices is a useful contribution to exploring solutions and taking them to scale to maximize gains for African women and girls within the context of accelerating achievements and realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU Agenda 2063.

Further, the Guidance Note creates an understanding of what actions took place, when and the way they contributed to a positive change in the lives of women and girls. The process of documenting good practices in gender equality and women's empowerment must also capture challenges, risks and mitigation to contribute to learning by those responsible for the interventions.

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4 *The Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda*, a joint study by UN Women, UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative and the World Bank conducted in 2015.

The reasons for documenting good practices thus include:

- Providing an opportunity to systematically record and share good practices within and between countries and regions, to increase the potential for accelerating gains for women and girls.

- Demonstrating the diverse ways that organizations/actors address gender equality and women's empowerment challenges.

- Broadening the understanding about what works, and encouraging replicability, scalability and/or investment in further documenting successes and challenges in implementation.

Documentation of good practices must balance information and details related to the intervention with good analyses to create a knowledge base of what works and why particular approaches succeed in certain contexts (UNGEI, 2014)[5]. This information should be supported by the presentation of robust evidence.

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5 *Documenting Good Practice in Girls' Education and Gender Equality: Guidance on how to produce a case study* (UNGEI, 2014)

4.

WHOM DOES THE GUIDANCE NOTE TARGET?

The objective of the Guidance Note is to encourage gender equality actors and advocates to document good practices so that others may learn from these experiences and adopt similar approaches. The Guidance Note targets all gender equality and women's empowerment advocates and actors who have successfully implemented interventions to accelerate gains for women and girls in Africa and across the world. Specifically, the Guidance Note targets the United Nations, Regional Intergovernmental and Inter-parliamentary bodies, governments, CSOs, private sector players, academia, men and boys, women and girls themselves and others working to find sustainable solutions on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).

5.

WHAT MAKES "A GOOD PRACTICE"?

A good practice refers to interventions, business practices, processes or methodologies that are ethical, fair, responsive to the needs of women and girls, replicable, scalable, and effective. Such a practice accelerates gender equality and women's empowerment and can therefore be recommended for replication. A good practice is one that has been used consistently; and tested to ensure good and reliable results.[6]

More specifically, a good practice responds to each of the following conditions:

1) **Gender responsive:** A description of the practice must show how actors—in this case women and girls— were systematically engaged in the conceptualization, design, implementation and monitoring of the intervention and how this led to improved livelihoods and incomes among women. It should also address underlying causes of the inequalities that women and girls have continuously faced.

2) **Employs a human rights-based approach**: It protects the rights of individuals specifically women, girls and children, including social and economic rights and the Do No Harm principle. A good practice is one that should avoid cases where the intervention empowers one specific group of women and girls while disempowering the other group of women and girls or another group of audience in the long term. The security for women and girls and the community at large must be at the center of the intervention at all stages of implementation. A good practice must follow a human rights-based approach that aligns with international standards; addresses

inequalities and discrimination; involves active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders, including women's organizations and networks; and promotes accountability and provision of effective remedies[7].

3) **Effective and successful:** A good practice has proven its strategic relevance as the most effective way to bring women and girls into the heart of development. Its successful adoption either in Africa or the rest of the world has had positive impacts on women, girls and their communities. A good practice must also demonstrate that it employs cost-effective methodologies in its implementation including demonstrating the link between activities and results (actual and/ or expected) in women's and girls' lives, and in relation to the strengthening of systems.

4) **Inherently participatory and adopts a capacity-building approach:** It must engage the rights holders in participatory approaches to promote a joint sense of ownership of decisions and actions which affect women and girls including collaboration with like-minded actors such as the United Nations, civil society organizations, and government, private sector, key decision makers in the community i.e. the elders who are the custodians of culture and other development actors. The practice should build the capacities of women and girls as active participants and not mere recipients of development.

5) **Replicable, scalable and adaptable:** The intervention should exhibit potential for replicability, scalability and adaptability in diverse contexts.

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6   FAO, 2014 Template for Documenting Best Practices

7   UN Women 2018-2021 Strategic Plan

The documentation should allow for learning on approaches and methodologies for replication, scalability and adoption within relevant contexts.

6) **Technically, environmentally, economically and socially feasible and sustainable:** The intervention should meet the essential needs of the world's poorest, especially women and girls, without compromising their ability to address future needs. It should also create understanding and support between women and men in the society. The intervention should show that it is sustainable by leveraging funds for continuation, securing its adoption into policies or programming, or building the capacity of actors (government, academic institutions, civil society, communities, women and men, boys and girls) to integrate the initiative into existing service delivery systems

and community development frameworks thus ensuring continued institutional and financial support. It must be relevant, relate to the needs of women and girls and should respond to these needs by offering accessible, affordable and sustainable solutions that identify the priorities and needs of women and girls.

7) **Lessons Learned:** A good practice facilitates learning by generating lessons that are relevant for dissemination and transfer to other contexts for the benefit of women and girls. It should identify and reflect on the conditions that contributed towards success and provide additional knowledge to inform broader thinking about gender equality and women's empowerment, including potential constraints and risks moving forward.

6.

METHODOLOGY FOR DOCUMENTING A GOOD PRACTICE

UN Women recommends a systematic methodology for documenting good practices. The steps suggested to be taken include:

- Conduct **resource mapping** in terms of availability and adequacy of financial and technical resources for the documentation.

- Form a **documentation team** comprising research, thematic, communication and knowledge management experts who will implement the documentation plan. This ensures that the good practice meets the minimum thresholds set out in the criteria for what constitutes a good practice in the context of gender equality and women's empowerment.

- Develop **a concept paper** for the documentation outlining objectives, process, methodology and deliverables from the documentation.

- Conduct a **stakeholder mapping** to identify who will contribute information for documentation and include **beneficiary mapping** to capture the impact of the intervention on the lives of women and girls.

- Develop an implementation **plan for the documentation** including data sources and reliance on evidence produced from evaluations and/or monitoring data.

- Select a **qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods documentation methodology**. The mixed methods approach is preferred since it captures the quality of the intervention in the lives of women and girls by ensuring information is captured on the magnitude of the impact while also recording their feelings and perceptions about it.

- Develop the **tools for data collection** including interviews, questionnaires, observation checklists, focus group discussion guides, key informant interview guides among others.

- Collect **data**

- **Develop a Report as per template:** This includes collating all data collected ensuring the minimum criteria of what constitutes good practices on gender equality and women's empowerment. Finalizing the report shall involve quality assurance, editing, approval, and design of the documentation in readiness for dissemination.

- After documentation, and if resources permit, setting up a **peer review** by external stakeholders to validate findings.

• **The following diagram summarizes the process:**

RESOURCE MAPPING
- Stakeholders
- Data
- Electronic / sites

DATA COLLECTION
- Stakeholders
- Data
- Electronic / sites

PEER REVIEW & VALIDATION
- Identify Peer Reviewers
- TORs
- Feedback

DISSEMINATION
- Dissemination strategy
- Include diverse forms
- Print and multi media- Infographics, audio visuals, pictorial among others
- Mechanism including meetings, social media, mainstream media, stakeholder consultations, web utilities among others

7.

DOCUMENTATION TEMPLATE

The documentation must leverage evidence-based reporting with available and/or sourced qualitative and quantitative data and information. It requires clear articulation of methodologies allowing for lessons learned to emerge for readers to borrow and replicate. Make sure to combine the use of multimedia including photos, text and data to capture the impact and drive readers into potential replication and adoption. The writing style must be in line with respective agency guidelines and templates.

The documentation must consider diverse dissemination mechanism and platforms before hand to ensure that information captured is designed in a manner that makes it possible to leverage print, multi media-infographics, text, audio, images, animations, video and interactive content among others for effective and efficient dissemination. It must also consider tools of dissemination including convening, digital media, social media, print and/ or other forms available for wider outreach on the GEWE agenda.

The following sections must be included in the documentation of a good practice on gender equality and women's empowerment:

1. Cover page
• Organization name, address and contact information; intervention's title, high resolution picture, and geographical focus.

2. Executive Summary
• This should be a summary of the documentation including key messages and lessons. This section should clearly state why the documentation is relevant to broader learning and potential replication and scalability.

3. Table of Contents
• This should include a list of figures, tables, text boxes, acronyms, abbreviations and acknowledgements. It should be accurately aligned to the respective pages.

4. Context
• Demonstrate a thorough understanding of context and challenges, with a gender lens, to justify the design of the intervention and the problem being addressed as it relates to women and girls. It should situate the intervention within the broader literature and current debates on gender equality and women's empowerment.

5. Documentation Methodology
• The methods utilized. For example; consultations with stakeholders, peer reviews, data collection processes

6. Description of the Intervention
• The description needs to reflect the rationale and justification for the intervention, and detail its geographical coverage, beneficiaries (women and girls), the problem being tackled by the intervention, intended outcomes, strategies utilized in implementation, activities aligned to the objectives, stakeholders involved including their specific roles and the duration of the intervention.

7. Originality
• Is it a new concept or a variation of an existing idea?
• Is it unique to the specified area or adapted from elsewhere?

9. Results, relevance and impact

- Has it, or will it, result in fundamentally positive change or simply a minor adjustment in the lives of women and girls?
- Will the impact be on multiple operational areas or just one specific area?
- How many women and girls have, or will, benefit from the intervention? And how? (Please include qualitative and quantitative information.)
- Include any quotes, anecdotes or short stories from beneficiaries and other stakeholders, that relate to the impact of the intervention on the lives of women and girls.
- Does the intervention make women central to development?
- Does it employ cost-effective methodologies in its implementation including demonstrating the link between activities and results (actual or expected) in women's and girls' lives, and in relation to the strengthening of systems?
- How does the intervention relate to the needs of women and girls at all levels and respond to those needs by offering sustainable solutions that identify the priorities and needs of women and girls? The intervention must be accessible, affordable and mitigate challenges they face.

10. Sustainability

- Does the intervention meet the essential needs of the world's poorest specifically women and girls, without disempowering any other population and compromising their ability to address future needs?
- Does the innovation lead to long lasting impact on socioeconomic empowerment for women and girls?
- Can the development approach be applied to similar problems/ opportunities?
- Is the intervention friendly to the ecological environment of women and girls?
- Is the intervention socially sustainable? Does it create/ensure understanding and support between women and men in the society?
- Will it be cost-effective to implement?
- Does the intervention build into adoption of policies or programming, and build the capacity of actors (whether government, academic

institutions, civil society, communities, women and girls) to integrate the initiative into existing service delivery systems and community development frameworks to ensure continued institutional and financial support?
- Is this intervention easy to replicate and scale up in different contexts for the benefit of women and girls?
- Where is the intervention rooted? Government; decentralized government; community?

12. Challenges and Risks

This section should discuss all the key challenges and risks the implementation faced across social, political, cultural, technological, legal and economic contexts.

- What are the key challenges and risks?
- What did not work and why?
- What were the impacts of the challenges in the achievement of results for women and girls?
- What mitigation options should be adopted to avoid the same challenges in the future?

13. Lessons Learned

This should outline overall lessons learned in the process of implementing the intervention.

- What improvements could be done to the intervention as learned from the implementation experience?
- What were the key enablers and accelerators of change in the lives of women and girls?
- Why was it important to involve stakeholders in the implementation of the intervention, including women and girls?
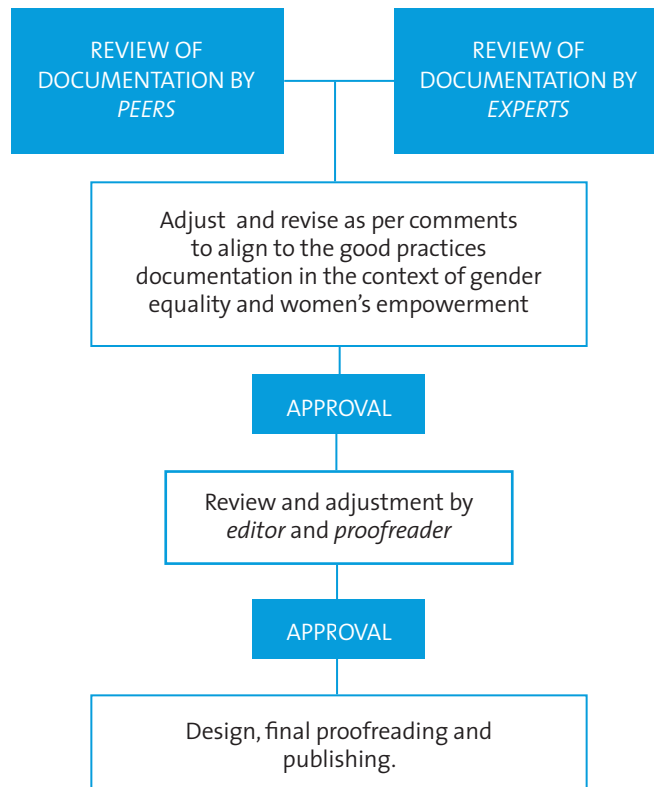
14. ANNEX

- This should include relevant data, information and links that the readers would find useful in broadening their understanding of the intervention and its impact in the lives of women and girls including lessons learned and potential replication and/or scalability.

8.

REVIEW OF THE DOCUMENTATION

This is one of the final stages of producing the publication. Involve subject matter experts in the review to ensure that your documentation covers all the areas listed and aligns to the minimum thresholds for good practice documentation in the context of gender equality and women's empowerment. The review will also point to areas of weakness in the documentation such as information and data gaps. Following peer review, the content should then be subjected to technical editing and proofreading to ensure alignment with relevant agency standards including referencing and template compliance. Where a lot of changes are recommended by the reviewers, it is recommended that after the revision, the draft be presented again to the reviewers for validation; however, where the comments are not major, the draft can then undergo editing, design and publishing.


REVIEW OF DOCUMENTATION BY *PEERS*

REVIEW OF DOCUMENTATION BY *EXPERTS*

Adjust and revise as per comments to align to the good practices documentation in the context of gender equality and women's empowerment

APPROVAL

Review and adjustment by *editor* and *proofreader*

APPROVAL

Design, final proofreading and publishing.

9.

DESIGN AND PUBLISHING

Design the publication according to specific agency branding guidelines and style manuals.
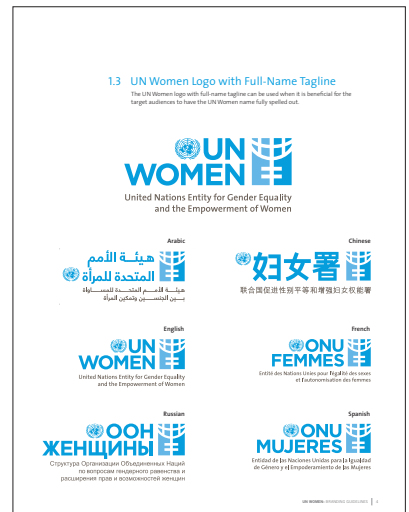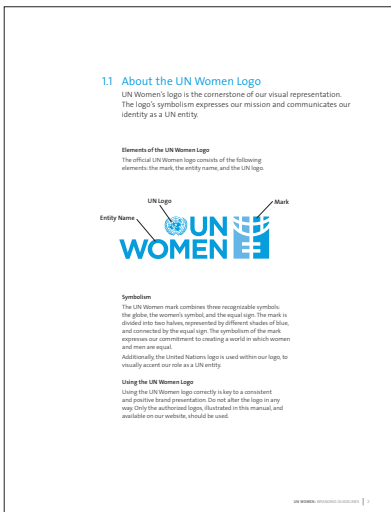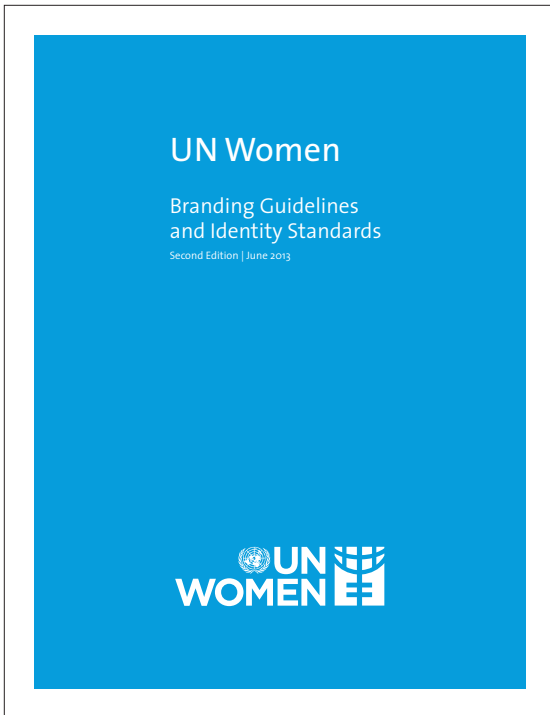
excerpt of UN Women Branding Guidelines

10.

DISSEMINATION OF THE GOOD PRACTICE

Develop a dissemination strategy for the good practice which covers all relevant networks, collectives, government entities, private sector and development actors, academia, women and girls and other stakeholders of interest. Dissemination mechanisms can include: a launch of the documentation; policy dialogues; virtual dissemination via email lists, webinars, social media chats (Facebook and Twitter, Google Hangouts, e discussions), conferences, and knowledge events such as the Sharefair by UN Women. Dissemination shall be in the forms including inter alia print, multimedia- infographics, text, audio, images, animations, video and interactive content for effective and efficient dissemination.

Good Practices Pyramid

UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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