



THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

PROGRAMMING LESSONS FOR STRENGTHENING MOVEMENTS AND SOLIDARITY FOR AN END TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA





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ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CBO	Community-based organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979
CSO	Civil society organization
ESA	East and Southern Africa
EVAWG	Ending violence against women and girls
FEMNET	African Women's Development and Communication Network
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GBV	Gender-based violence
GEWE	Gender equality and women's empowerment
GIMAC	Gender is My Agenda Campaign
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, plus
Maputo Protocol	Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa 2003
NAP	National Action Plan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSP	National Strategic Plan
OPD	Organization of persons with disabilities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOAWR	Solidarity for African Women's Rights (Coalition)
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
SVRI	Sexual Violence Research Initiative
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WHO	World Health Organization
WROs	Women's rights organizations
UN	United Nations

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Through a collaborative process, the research and report were prepared by Dr. Laura Davidson, Sunita Caminha, June Ndeti and Jackline Kiambi. Preliminary findings were presented at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum in Mexico in September 2022. It is hoped that the report will be valuable tool for informing joint Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) programme design and implementation by the UN, governments, donors, non-governmental organizations and wider civil society to accelerate progress on ending violence against women and girls in East and Southern Africa and beyond.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings from UN Women’s empirical qualitative research on joint initiatives for ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) implemented between 2016-2022 in East and Southern Africa (ESA).

Recognizing the growing attention and increasing investment in joint initiatives for EVAWG as the scale of the problem has gained visibility, this study draws from a programmatic review of UN Women’s experiences, considering that UN Women has its most joint UN initiatives in East and Southern Africa. It seeks to provide a stronger evidence base for the value of joint EVAWG initiatives and looks at their contributions to strengthening solidarity between actors and connecting movements to accelerate progress for women and girls to live free from violence in the ESA region. Given the slow progress despite the expansion of efforts on EVAWG, it is critical to understand how all actors and joint initiatives on EVAWG as a programming model can leverage partnerships so that their efforts have a greater impact.

The study explores the aspects of joint initiatives which facilitate or limit their success and aims to encourage all actors seeking to end violence against women and girls (VAWG) to invest both time and funding in collaborative approaches. The research is founded on the understanding that when actors work in solidarity and operate in unity, it builds collective power. This collective power is at the core of transforming the gender inequality which underpins violence against women and girls.

The evidence generated by the study reaffirms that joint EVAWG initiatives have the potential to allow for more impactful and accountable programming. The study involved a desk review of 40 documents (primarily programmatic reports and evaluations), as well as virtual

focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and a survey.

These reached 132 individuals (105 women and 27 men) from women’s rights organizations and other civil society groups, government institutions and development partners from 13 countries in ESA where UN Women has presence.

“Ending violence against women and girls requires collective action from multiple stakeholders (e.g., health workers, researchers, UN agencies, gender experts, law enforcement agencies, etc.). Finding a way to work together is therefore critical for success.”
Survey Respondent

The study findings reveal the potential power of partnerships to end VAWG which can be harnessed when actors working in this area shift their lens from focusing on the individual or institutional operational spaces in which they are based to a broader view of the entire ecosystem in which actors co-exist. There is general agreement that addressing VAWG requires holistic and multi-sectoral approaches which work across the ecological model and the continuum of prevention and response.

Notably, most stakeholders consulted also believed that both **solidarity** and **collaboration** were essential elements for joint initiatives on EVAWG to be effective.

The study has also highlighted, however, that this holistic viewpoint is often not internalized in the development, design or implementation of joint initiatives. Few partnerships working on EVAWG appeared to have embedded an explicit focus on strengthening solidarity or collaboration between actors or between movements. Without this intentionality, there is a tendency to overlook the factors that limit or challenge solidarity and collaboration. For example, limited inception phases in several joint initiatives contributed to strained relations between partners. In other instances, the late inclusion of key groups affected by violence in post-design consultation made engagement more tokenistic than meaningful. The disconnect between the expressed values of organizations and the way in which EVAWG

efforts are delivered reduces the ability of actors to transform the systems and structures which enable VAWG to take place.

Ample evidence supports the value of joint EVAWG initiatives, and nearly 50 examples were identified by respondents as contributing to progress on EVAWG. These ranged from large multi-year joint programmes, such as the Spotlight Initiative, policy-based initiatives centered around a national plan or strategy, community-level interventions such as SASA!, to campaigns and peer-led coalitions and networks involving partnerships between organizations and institutions.

Within these initiatives, there were numerous examples highlighting the value of comprehensive programmes which brought cross-sectoral actors together at national and local levels towards achieving common objectives.



The partnerships fostered growing ownership and sustainability of results over time, contributing to greater visibility and political will, improved coordination and reduced the risk of duplication. When implemented well, joint initiatives enhanced the quality and reach of survivor services, as well as mobilized new allies, and expanded networks and relationships within communities and across countries.

These are important contributions, but there is also evidence that when joint initiatives are not well-planned or coordinated and where resource competition drives the agenda, they can miss vital opportunities and waste precious time and resources, further delaying progress. It is therefore important to move from these isolated successes of joint initiatives toward ensuring that the standard for joint initiatives is their ability to bring progress for EVAWG.

Looking at what works, the findings revealed similar characteristics which contribute to effective joint initiatives, as well as strengthening solidarity and collaboration

within joint initiatives. These relate to foundations such as having a common vision, shared values and principles, including organizational leadership which embraces and encourages equitable relationships as part of joint work, a willingness to “see beyond ourselves” and engage diverse partners in the efforts. The journey to nurture these values requires all actors to shift the frame of reference: EVAWG initiatives operate in an ecosystem – every part makes the whole, has a value and needs to thrive.

The components of collaborative joint initiatives are also linked to processes as well as structures for connecting, coordinating and facilitating exchange between partners in ways that promote mutual accountability and work to decolonialize power imbalances within relationships. Finally, it is vital to have an enabling environment which recognizes the significant time and quality of resources required to plan and create the space for results to emerge.

Considering these characteristics, the study proposes that UN Women and all partners should consider and explore ways to take forward the following five actions for future joint initiatives:

1. **Prioritize accountability** to diverse women and girls so that those most affected by violence are guiding all stages of joint initiatives and that partnerships model accountable practices.
2. **Promote connections as well as safe spaces to build trust, shared experiences, and joint learning**, where honest and humble exchange of perspectives and practices between partners can enable the creation of a joint vision for EVAWG across actors and shared understanding of approaches to be used.
3. **Cultivate an appreciation for the wider ecosystem in which all actors operate**, recognizing the value of diverse contributions and collective results, with honest reflection of power imbalances, analysis of strengths, and a spirit of mutual learning which values practice-based knowledge.
4. **Invest in deliberate approaches and structures which build solidarity and collaboration** within initiatives and across movements for EVAWG at the individual, organizational, and policy levels. Collaboration and solidarity are recognized as essential components of joint initiatives, but there needs to be greater understanding of what actions can advance solidarity (for example, attention collective care) and what strengthens collaboration, why they both matter, and to what degree they make a difference for effective EVAWG initiatives.
5. **Fund longer-term strategic cooperation aligned to feminist principles** which explicitly dismantles resource competition and power imbalances between actors, including through more flexible funding modalities. Intentional investment in collaboration and solidarity requires actors to dedicate financial and human resources over time with attention to what works and can support partnerships which can overcome challenges and lead to long-term impact for EVAWG.

Through collaboration and solidarity, it is possible to transform communities, countries and the continent to unite in power against violence and make progress together, with, and for diverse women and girls.





INTRODUCTION

The most recent report by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations (UN) Department of Economic and Social Affairs in September 2022 estimated that achieving full gender equality in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG5) could take close to 300 years at the current rate of progress.ⁱ

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a significant barrier to gender equality, and global health, climate and humanitarian crises have further exacerbated the intensity of VAWG, especially for women and girls most marginalized in society. The need for deploying more effective strategies which accelerate the end of VAWG has never been so crucial. The pandemic scale of VAWG, the diversity of women and girls' experiences with multiple and intersecting forms of violence and the complexity of addressing its root causes has put growing attention to multi-stakeholder partnerships as an effective, accountable, and sustainable approach to accelerate progress on the issue.

The visibility of VAWG as the most pervasive human rights violation has grown alongside increasing attention to strengthening partnerships. There is ample evidence that collaboration and solidarity within and across organizations and institutions working through

different entry points (including via strong civil society partnerships) are the only way to bring an end to VAWG.

Nearly ten years after the UN Secretary-General launched the UNiTE Campaign in 2008 to bring more coordinated UN system-wide efforts to end violence against women and girls, the European Union and UN launched the [Spotlight Initiative](#) in September 2017, designed as the single largest investment on EVAWG globally, with a dedicated pillar to strengthening civil society organizations and women's movements and civil society engagement embedded in the Initiative's governance mechanism.

The commitment to joint work is visible within regional and international commitments, including the [Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence](#) (GBV). Partnership is a core aspect of Sustainable Development Goal 17 and a strategic direction within the UN Development System Reform. For example, at a virtual meeting on UN Women's new Strategic Note for East and Southern Africa (2022-2025), civil society speakers called on UN Women to invest in the conditions that create an enabling environment for movement-building and its sustenance.

Notably, three of the eleven points shared by UN Women Executive Director, Sima Bahous, focused on joint work:

- intersectional alliance-building,
- cultivating partnerships with marginalized groups, and
- supporting movement-building for solidarityⁱ



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These developments reflect an acknowledgement of the need to create and expand the space for women's rights organizations and feminist movements as key actors to advance the agenda to end VAWG. A review of the UN Women's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan highlighted that to effect meaningful and lasting change, the entity's support to women's rights organizations (WROs) needed to be more focused and coordinated around specific common goals, which has contributed to the inclusion of dedicated outcomes in UN Women's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan to amplifying women's voice, leadership & agency as well as continued coordination of the UN system on gender equality to strengthen its impact.

Recognizing the potential importance of joint initiatives in accelerating progress on ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) as one of UN Women's main thematic areas and the need to reflect on previous lessons from joint EVAWG programmes in the current context, UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) undertook this research to help fill a knowledge gap on joint EVAWG initiatives. The research was conducted between June and October 2022 and has consolidated experiences on joint EVAWG efforts and analyzed approaches to multi-stakeholder collaboration and solidarity. Through qualitative mixed methods, the research drew insights from 132 stakeholders residing across the 13 countries in East and Southern Africa where UN Women has presence via key virtual informant interviews, focus group discussions and a survey, complemented by a review of programmatic literature related to joint initiatives for EVAWG, primarily from the region.

The study findings show a link between programmes which have a positive impact on ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) and those that contribute to collaboration and solidarity, including attention to intersectionality. The positive impact of such initiatives in turn results in improved accountability to women and girls. The research has considered what works best, identifying

the components within joint initiatives on EVAWG which either appear to enhance project objectives, or negatively affect them. The study also inquired into how much improvements in multi-stakeholder collaboration and solidarity created via joint initiatives can strengthen the results for EVAWG. The study further considered how programmes can better connect movements working across issues to nurture and strengthen solidarity between actors and leverage partnerships for greater impact in both preventing and responding to VAWG.

Overall, the research aims to raise the visibility of existing efforts and build on the evidence on efficacy as well as lessons learned from them, such as from the Spotlight Initiative (which in Africa, works in eight different countries and at the continental level). It has also explored how joint initiatives can contribute beyond their geographic scope, most often at the national level, and facilitate greater accountability for regional or international commitments, such as under the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa 2003 (the Maputo Protocol) or more recent commitments, such as the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

It is hoped that the research will support more intentional approaches to joint programming, drawing from the evidence on the elements required by joint EVAWG initiatives in design and planning and the promising practices identified to support strengthened movements and accelerate achievement of national and regional commitments for EVAWG. The findings can serve as a reference for governments, civil society, regional actors, the UN and other development partners as well as philanthropic actors to inform their investments and EVAWG efforts. When programmes incorporate solidarity and collaboration (both within organizations, initiatives and across movements), they can bring greater accountability to and more sustainable impact for women and girls in all their diversity across the region.

The image features a vertical split background. The top half is a solid blue color, and the bottom half is a solid red color. A large, stylized number '2' is overlaid on the entire image. The top curve of the '2' is in a light blue shade, while the bottom curve and the vertical stem are in a light red shade. The word 'METHODOLOGY' is written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font across the middle of the red section. A thin white horizontal line is positioned directly beneath the text.

METHODOLOGY

UN Women designed this research with a purposely collaborative approach to the methodology. Three team members from the UN Women ending violence against women (EVAW) Unit (Sunita Caminha, June Ndeti and Jackline Kiambi) at the East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) worked closely with and guided by an international consultant, Dr. Laura Davidson, throughout the study.

The methodology undertaken within the research had five phases: the inception phase involving the co-creation of methodology, a data collection phase, a data analysis and processing phase, and a synthesis and reporting phase. Given that UN Women was to present findings at the September 2022 Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) Forum, the reporting phase was truncated into three parts:

- (i) a joint desk review distilled into a Summary Report;
- (ii) an initial analysis after the data collection process, with preliminary findings and any gaps or challenges encountered, as well as lessons learned drawn out;
- (iii) a validation of the findings through a presentation for key UN Women and external stakeholders conducted on 12 September 2022, incorporating feedback as relevant; and
- (iv) a draft report on findings and recommendations and finalization following feedback from a Reference Group of external and internal reviewers.

The research team actively engaged UN Women Focal Points working on EVAWG at the country level in the research from the finalization of the methodology, the identification of research questions and data collection tools, and in the data collection, analysis and validation.

In line with the collaborative process, all documents were jointly accessed through a shared folder, enabling simultaneous work on documents, spreadsheets, reports and

presentations and key decisions were made collectively. To avoid duplications, discuss roadblocks, and pivot where necessary, the research team met weekly throughout the process. The Final Report and desk review which informed it were co-created, with different researchers writing specific sections, followed by review of another team member, with revisions by two members ensured consistency of voice and a final read-through by UN Women EVAW Unit as the commissioning team.

A literature review of relevant documentation provided by UN Women or sourced online preceded the mixed-methods data collection approach. The desk review was conducted by two members of the research team (Dr. Laura Davidson and Sunita Caminha), with documents distributed to allow team members to review material related to their knowledge or interest. In total, 40 documents were reviewed which covered Africa as a region, with nine country-specific resources published or drafted between 2016 and 2022 (including related to programmes in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe). The desk review highlighted information relevant to the research objectives, and informed the development of the data collection tools (e.g. the drafting of appropriate questions to frame the research). It also triangulated information shared during the data collection.

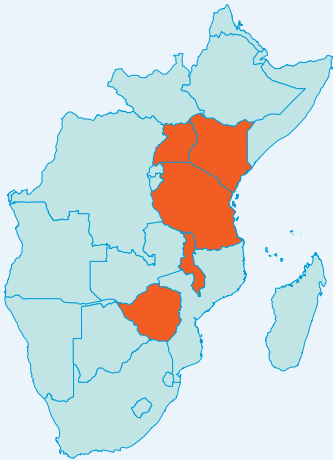
Considering countries where UN Women has had joint EVAWG interventions since 2015 under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and following the UN Development System reforms, the research focused more in-depth data collection from five countries:

Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe, as agreed in consultation with Country Office colleagues. This complemented engagement with stakeholders in the focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interviews (KII) based in all thirteen countries where UN Women has a presence in the ESA Region.

The data collection reached 132 individuals in total (105 women, 27 men) and used mainly empirical qualitative data and limited quantitative data collected through a survey for participants (eight responses) who were unable to attend a key informant interview (KII) or focus group discussion (FGD). The findings were also triangulated through the readily available and useful secondary quantitative data identified in the literature review.



The research focused more in-depth data collection from five countries: **Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe**



Draft tools and instruments within a matrix for data collection were developed based on the agreed research questions. As much as possible, tool development involved inclusive and participatory approaches. The aim was for 25-30 KIIs to be conducted. All key informants and FGD participants were informed in the invitation email and at the start of the discussion how the data would be collected and having the option to opt out of the research. They were informed that their responses would remain anonymous and that by joining the discussions, they were consenting for their inputs to be used in the research and could rescind their consent during or after the discussion. No participant rescinded their consent. Key informants and FGD participants were also invited to indicate any accessibility measures needed to facilitate their participation, although no requests were made. The discussions were recorded to facilitate accurate transcripts and analysis, and audio files will be deleted upon the report's completion.

The research team interviewed 28 people (24 women and 4 men) from ten different African countries and one regional body. The key informants and FGD participants included relevant UN Women country and regional office personnel (including select UN Women Representatives) and other UN agency staff involved in joint EVAWG initiatives in [4-5 countries] with joint EVAWG initiatives (past and present), civil society partners, government representatives, especially from the Ministry of Gender, relevant donor and development partners, a representative from the African Union, members of the UN Women EAWWG Reference Group, and personnel of partner organizations involved in implementing joint EAWWG initiatives. Details are provided in Annex 4.

The data collection was virtual, and questions were tested with UN Women personnel, then refined and working definitions used to frame discussions.

Upon request, one set of questions, modeled on the originals, was tailored for a UN Women management respondent to draw out more strategic insights on the inception, design and planning of joint initiatives, with answers reinforcing those from the other key informants.

Fourteen FGDs took place (including one pilot FGD, whereupon questions were further refined) with civil society and UN personnel, reaching 96 people (76 women, 20 men) from 13 East and Southern African nations. To facilitate a participatory approach to the FGDs, Zoom polls and Google Jam board were used to complement the discussions. Interpretation was provided for the FGD in Burundi (English-French) and for the FGD with civil society in Mozambique (English-Portuguese).

Initial data analysis was conducted to draw out and triangulate themes with the literature review and findings discussed among the research team. A presentation was made to 38 key stakeholders at a validation workshop on 12 September 2022, with stakeholders invited to comment on whether the findings reflected their experiences with joint initiatives

on EVAWG, whether there were any areas of research which should be explored further in the future, and whether the recommendations were relevant and feasible and could add value to their work in the field of EVAWG. Participants were also requested to consider what might improve uptake of the findings, and overall, participants concurred that the findings were in line with their experiences. Participants commented on aspects of the findings they felt were critical (such as accountability) and sought questions for clarification on select points.

Following the validation of the initial findings, one member of the Research Team, Sunita Caminha, presented highlights of the study's findings at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum on 22 September in Mexico.ⁱⁱⁱ The report was drafted, with inputs received from the Research Reference Group and validated through a presentation at the end of October 2022. The report will be accompanied by a summary brief and on the research findings and recommendations in various formats to facilitate dissemination and uptake with diverse stakeholders.



LIMITATIONS

Several limitations were encountered while undertaking this research related to the methodology used in the data collection, the scope of content reviewed, and the ability to reach a breadth of stakeholders through the timeframe and virtual engagement.

- The definition of joint initiatives was intentionally focused on formal programming, where initiatives have a joint work plan and a common budgetary and governance framework given the resource investments in joint programmes. However, some participants raised concerns that the definition used was too restrictive, noting valuable initiatives which are not a formal joint programme. In response, the research team accepted inputs related to experiences of joint initiatives which did not fit the criteria defined. Similarly, nuances in unpacking the terms of 'solidarity' and 'collaboration' meant stakeholder interpretations of the approaches at times overlapped. There were several adjustments in the questions, including a merger of questions to reduce perceived repetition during data collection. In other cases, the complexity of questions needed to be simplified, despite the piloting of the key informant and focus group discussion questions.
- The scope of the research is a programmatic analysis, with documentation of joint initiatives reviewed limited to UN Women programmes for ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) in East and Southern Africa. In this regard, the findings are not exhaustive to all joint EVAWG programmes, but rather illustrate the experience of UN Women and related partners.
- The research was undertaken within a short timeframe (July to October 2022) given the plan to present findings at the SVRI Forum in September 2022, with the data collection period (August) coinciding with holidays for some stakeholders. In response, a survey questionnaire adapted from the key informant questions was shared with participants who were unable to attend the interviews or focus group discussions, although only eight responses were received within the two weeks in which the survey was active. In general, the responses received reinforced inputs received through the key informant and focus group discussions.
- Considering the timeframe and capacity to adapt the methodology appropriately, the study consultations reached limited organizations and groups representing survivors of violence or women and girls facing multiple forms of discrimination, which will be an area of further attention when taking forward the study findings.
- Technological challenges related to poor internet connectivity, Zoom fatigue and limited familiarity or engagement with interactive aspects of virtual discussions (e.g. Jam board, Zoom polls), limited the full participation of stakeholders in some aspects of the data collection. In some cases, respondents were unable to answer all questions, and in several FGDs, participants left early or were not present for the entirety.



THE EVIDENCE
FOR JOINT
EVAWG
INITIATIVES

There is a strong evidence base that has guided the attention to nurturing multi-stakeholder partnerships for EVAWG, including the critical support to women’s movements and civil society strengthening. The COVID-19 pandemic renewed the need for collaboration in this area and within the context of the UN Development System Reforms, a 2020 recommendation encouraged ‘UN entities to assist governments in taking action to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, and to support governments to adopt specific measures to protect the poor, women, youth and children from all forms of violence and discrimination’, including through coordination and coherence of the UN system.^{iv} The 2021 Corporate Evaluation of UN Women’s UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women further found that 51% of Gender Theme Group evaluation survey respondents reported the existence of joint UN workplans on EVAWG.^v

These joint efforts are manifested at country, regional and global levels through a variety of UN EVAWG programmes underway, including but not limited to the Spotlight Initiative, the Joint UN Essential Services Programme, the roll-out of the RESPECT Framework (2019) and Implementation Guide (2020) developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Women, and endorsed by ten other UN, bilateral, and multilateral agencies, among others. Multi-stakeholder partnerships for driving collective change is also at the center of the [Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence](#) (GBV) and within the broader six [Action Coalitions](#) launched at the 2021 Generation Equality Forum. It is notable that 42% of the 466 the GBV Action Coalition commitment-makers are from the continent of Africa and East and Southern Africa includes the Action Coalition leadership of the Government of Kenya and the youth-led YES! Trust Zimbabwe.

The importance of supporting women’s rights organizations and movements as a key aspect of an enabling environment for EVAWG is an explicit part of each of these efforts. This is also in line with evidence generated over the past decade on the role of women’s rights and feminist movements in advancing progress on EVAWG.^{vi}

To ensure joint efforts for EVAWG can be most effective, there is a need to take stock and reflect on the lessons emerging from the joint EVAWG initiatives. This analysis and UN Women’s presence in East and Southern Africa offers an opportunity to generate evidence from the region on how an explicit approach to multi-stakeholder collaboration and solidarity, including attention to strengthening movements and intersectionality, can contribute to improved accountability for women and girls.



42%
of 466

GBV Action Coalition commitment-makers are from the continent of Africa

Joint Initiatives as a Partnership Model

The growth of investments in joint programmes as part of the UN Development System Reform, for ending violence against women and girls, as well as broader development issues, reflects some of the assumptions around joint initiatives. For example, there is an expectation that by working jointly, programme or social change objectives can be reached faster, and results will be better than organizations working alone. Working jointly can be both an aim (such as fostering better relations between stakeholders) and a precursor for accelerated achievement on EVAWG, given that it involves a more holistic approach involving all members of society with attention to leaving no one behind.

This is essential for creating transformative change that can be sustained over time. Joint initiatives tend to be multi-year partnerships, and have a more prominent visibility, budget, and broad involvement of stakeholders, especially where initiatives are based within the UN system. If implemented well, joint initiatives can have a great impact on advancing strategic policy advocacy on EVAWG and reaching more communities with holistic interventions to prevent and respond to the issue. However, they also require significant human and financial resource commitments, and it is not necessarily

a given that joint approaches increase impact. Joint initiatives can magnify differences and drive resentment if there is not explicit attention to cultivating shared values and equitable partnerships, or when initiatives are not properly planned and coordinated, particularly given the inevitable differing power dynamics between organizations and entities. Thus, conducted poorly, joint work has the risk of stalling progress for EVAWG, and in worst scenarios, doing harm.

The UN Women 2019 Joint Programme Assessment on Gender Equality stated, collaboration within joint initiatives can facilitate “harmonization, reducing duplication, raising resources, and improving development effectiveness... [with] the potential to reduce duplication among organizations and facilitate the cost sharing of administrative responsibilities such as donor communication, reporting, and results monitoring....Joint programmes also facilitate increased coherence around policy and messaging, [and] facilitate bringing diverse stakeholders together”. The Assessment found that joint work and multi-sectoral collaboration save time (through reduction in the duplication of effort), resources and costs, where there is a clear understanding of partner complementarity and the value-addition of diverse actors.

A multi-stakeholder approach is also more effective as it allows partners to engage across the ecosystem, avoids repetition of interventions, and ‘donor fatigue’ in communities.

One of the main aims of this research was to identify programmatic components of joint initiatives which aid and accelerate the achievement of objectives for EVAWG. This was more complicated than expected. Although there were many examples of positive components shared which were thought to have had an impact on EVAWG, many of these were in fact related to general good EVAWG programming practice. In contrast, it proved more difficult to tease out aspects of joint initiatives which were related to the ‘jointness’ of work, whether on violence prevention or response.



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In general, more examples were provided related to joint responses to VAWG compared to joint approaches to prevention, although both prevention and response were part of most joint initiatives. For example, several stakeholders indicated that the provision of joint holistic services for survivors was an element of joint programmes that made them effective. Another example focused on the provision of women- and girl-friendly spaces in South Sudan to share experiences and develop skills, or rehabilitation and income-generating activities as prerequisites within joint EVAWG programmes. The use of multi-partner awareness-raising campaigns to influence decision-makers at the highest level or engagement with male leaders (including religious leaders) as advocates on gender inequality and to reduce the tolerance to VAWG within communities in Ethiopia were also mentioned as examples of effective practices within joint

initiatives. While these components contribute to supporting survivors and addressing VAWG, they are not specific to formal **joint initiatives**.

Despite this complexity, closer analysis of data collected, rephrasing and breaking down the semi-structured interview and FGD questions revealed numerous examples of initiatives where collaboration through joint initiatives increased impact. This reinforced the findings from the literature review, which preceded the consultations.

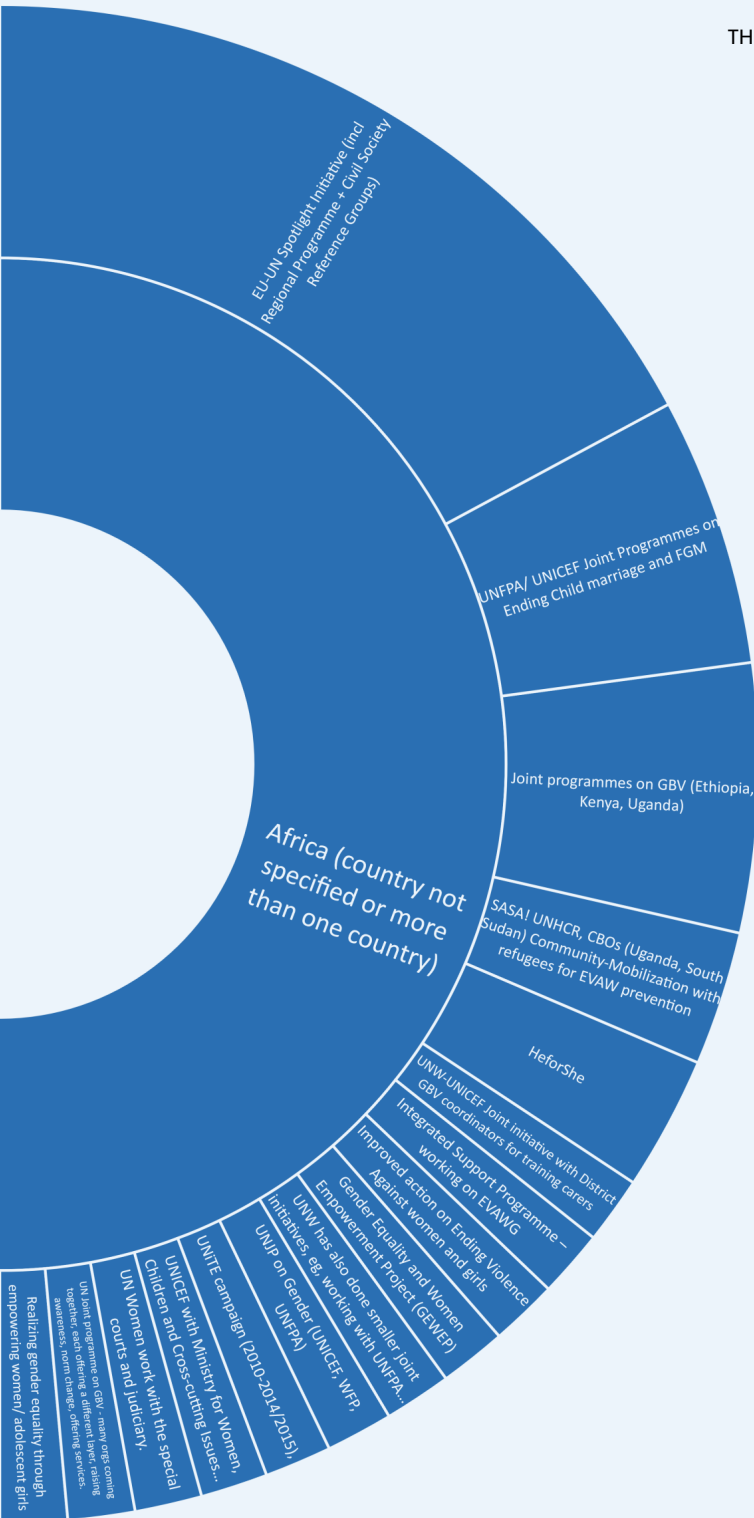
The study identified at least 50 joint initiatives (see Figure 1) for EVAWG which were highlighted by stakeholders or within the literature as effective initiatives, with the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative and the various joint UN Programmes on EVAWG or Gender-Based Violence most frequently mentioned during data collection.



FIGURE 1.
Examples of effective joint
EVAWG initiatives referred to
during the consultation



The Figure above shows the range of initiatives mentioned across countries, where the size of the circle is related to the number of times an initiative was mentioned. The graphic reflects the multiple efforts across actors working on EVAWG, and serves as an illustrative example of the landscape, noting that initiatives mentioned do not cover all joint initiatives on EVAWG in operation. The breadth of initiatives identified in the region further highlights the need for collaboration given the connections in geographic and thematic issues covered.



Joint EVAWG initiatives and achievement of regional commitments

The research also explored the degree to which joint or cross-movement EVAWG initiatives accelerate achievement of not only national, but also regional and international commitments relating to EVAWG, such as under the GBV Action Coalition or the Maputo Protocol. Overall, stakeholders consulted shared the shortcomings of regional instruments, including the lack of accountability mechanisms and responses also noted the lack of an explicit focus within joint EVAWG initiatives in addressing regional commitments. Considering the challenges identified, a more joint approach to achieve regional commitments might be a way to bring change as part of future initiatives.

One key informant felt that the different international calls to action which demanded that actors engage not as adversaries but as allies when addressing common areas of interest had a positive effect for some organizations and individuals. Another suggested that such high-level commitments should have more of a focus on their localization for signatory countries, with language customized to the context.



South Africa's National Strategic Plan (NSP) was highlighted as a positive attempt to do just that. The Civil Society Gender Pre-summit platform of the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) was also shared as a positive example at the regional level. It results in the tabling of outcomes of civil society engagement into a formal AU meeting, with decisions then taken to the AU policy organs. "Therefore, you can see [the chain of influence] from the AU citizens, into an AU platform, and then into the policy audience, the different policy organs, and Ministers of Gender, Ambassadors, Ministers of Foreign Affairs all the way to the summit. That is how they were actually able to adopt the positive masculinity Declaration, but also even the Decade on

Women. It comes from that particular process," stated one key informant.

Some of the challenges identified in advancing action on regional commitments was the disconnect between what is said and what is done. Under the Maputo Protocol and the SADC Gender Protocol, for example, there are many commitments geared towards ending child marriages and harmful practices like female genital mutilation (FGM), but "these commitments are mostly on paper, with no real mechanisms to hold states to account, except sending email submissions to the AU", lamented one respondent. Another respondent described regional documents as "very abstract" with little connection to the local level. Noting that for international agreements, attempts had been made to have shorter versions of NAPs and National Strategic Plans using infographics, but that "this is not happening with the Maputo Protocol. It doesn't find expression in many of the lives of the people or change their reality".



An experience from **Zimbabwe** was shared that highlights the power of collective organizing and advocacy. The Government has not ratified the Optional Protocol to the Maputo Protocol which would allow women's rights organizations (WROs) to bring grievances before the African Court, and the lack of ratification resulted in impunity. A respondent noted that despite numerous recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee on EVAWG in relation to politics, harmful practices, human trafficking, and child marriage which were to be implemented by 2024, as of February 2022, no implementation had taken place.

No progress report had been tabled before Parliament, and neither the Ministry of Women's Affairs nor the independent Zimbabwe Gender Commission mandated to provide oversight and hold the Government to account had inquired on the status of the recommendations.

The women's movement, however, successfully petitioned the Government through Parliament, resulting in the Ministry of Gender and the Zimbabwe Gender Commission being tasked to provide oral evidence on it.

Effective components of joint EVAWG initiatives

For the purposes of the study, the research team presented joint EVAWG initiatives using a definition adapted from the UN Development Group's definition of Joint Programmes:

"[A] formal partnership between two or more organizations working to achieve a specific set of results regarding EVAWG based on a set of activities contained in a joint work plan and with a common budgetary and governance framework, where each organization contributes distinct inputs/resources based on their respective mandates and comparative advantage".

The focus on formal initiatives was intentional given resources invested into formal programmes, but in response to feedback from key informants that the definition of joint initiatives was too rigid (e.g. elements around a joint work plan, common budgetary and governance framework), inputs from more informal joint initiatives work was included in data collection discussions.

Differentiating between effective components of EVAWG initiatives generally and the components that made joint EVAWG initiatives effective required unpacking responses and was more challenging than expected. There was a tendency for key informants and FGD participants to immediately raise useful practices to reduce VAWG, rather than identify elements specific to joint initiatives which made such initiatives work more smoothly, meet objectives, and garner better results. For example, individuals referred to the importance of engaging male leaders (including religious

leaders) to advocate for EVAWG, and work as champions to reduce community tolerance of VAWG in Ethiopia and Somalia. However, while these strategies helped to change harmful views about GBV, the approach did not require initiatives to be joint.

Through separating the elements identified as effective for EVAWG initiatives and focusing on those parts that were critical for joint approaches, the research identified a wide variety of components which appear to increase the effectiveness of joint initiatives for EVAWG. As with all programming, these components must be localized to the specific situation, programming country or regional context, and will need to be discussed in depth with all partners during the planning phase. The consultations revealed that components for the success of joint EVAWG initiatives linked to factors which relate to individual, organizational, programmatic and societal characteristics.

So while the research confirmed that joint initiatives could accelerate achievements on EVAWG, it also found cautionary tales of programmes with negative outcomes when joint work was poor. The research aimed to capture evidence of both good and bad joint programming practices, to analyze them, and to identify components which can be catalytic for positive change. The following summarizes the evidence on what aspects of joint initiatives contributed to their effectiveness on EVAWG, which can be organized into foundations, co-creation processes and influencing factors.

(1) Foundations

A FEMINIST BASE

As the foundation for strong EVAWG programming, rooting joint initiatives on EVAWG in feminist ideology was considered at the center of success by many individuals consulted. The recognition of gender inequality as being the root cause of violence against women and girls, and broader forms of GBV was repeatedly emphasized as the starting point for the creation of impactful interventions.

An example of this was the *Women's Voice and Leadership initiative*, designed with a feminist lens in South Africa in collaboration with support from the Government of Canada.

The initiative used a power and intersectionality analysis, covering cross-sections of women and girls and was purposive and intentional to bring in those voices that were not being heard by the team. For example, at the baseline report stage, there were few responses from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, plus (LGBTIQ+) community, likely in part arising from safety concerns. Observing this gap, the programme team specifically sought their perspectives and has remained intentional to bring voices on the margins into the spaces and conversations on EVAWG.

SHARED VALUES

Allied with this foundation is the need for joint values which emphasize and intentionally build equitable relationships within and across partnerships. Some participants described initiatives that had 'fallen apart' because certain organizations lacked transparency, did not espouse their states values, and/or failed to place the rights and needs of women and girls at their core. At the individual and organizational levels, what was crucial first and foremost was commitment to EVAWG, centering on women and girls in their diversity and taking a human rights-based, survivor-centred approach. If this is strong, then personal and organizational objectives and egos (which were often felt to sabotage joint work) alongside power imbalances could be managed. When the focus is firmly on championing women and girls and their lived experiences, this also helps to discourage competition for funding or favor or the lack of acknowledgement on the contribution of others - elements that are toxic for good outcomes.

A COLLECTIVE VISION

Building a shared vision across partners of what they want to achieve and how they can get there is an equally critical aspect for success. This is where many collaborations broke down. Having

a common feminist understanding of the cause of the problem does not necessarily lead to a shared vision with respect to the solution. In this regard, there is a need for a sound analysis of the specific context within which the intended work will be conducted, which reflects the understanding across actors engaging in a joint initiative. Such analysis requires time and intentional processes to give space to take stock of the diversity of perspectives and power dynamics coming together for any joint initiative.

This analysis can then inform the development of a clear and agreed approach on the intended collective goals and outcomes, which should be revisited regularly throughout implementation.

A PARTNERSHIP CULTURE AND EQUITABLE RELATIONS

A partnership culture of openness, trust and equitable relations between actors was felt to be vital for the success of joint initiatives. As one key stakeholder indicated, "engagement starts with personal relationships, feeling kindred and tapping into shared experiences". This will need to be nurtured over time as relationships evolve and address power hierarchies within partnerships.

All partners must be genuinely committed to sharing their time and expertise, and pooling resources (including financial) to increase impact on EVAWG. This linked to the need for collaboration and solidarity, with the relevant channels for effective communication, and partners encouraged (and committed) to using them regularly.

However, the *imposition* of joint work (for example, by a donor) did not tend to foster positive results; each partner needed to believe that working together was better than 'going it alone'. As the move towards joint initiatives is relatively new and the evolving processes are often demanding for many actors, the desire to work jointly may take time. Yet, there are successes and ways to build stronger joint efforts for more effective progress on EVAWG. Accordingly, donors need to champion the necessary time and resources to create this foundational shift in perspective.

“Joint initiatives are more labour-intensive and time-consuming than regular programming due to the need for increased communication among multiple partners and donors.” *Key Informant*

(2) Co-creation

INVOLVING THE ‘RIGHT’ PARTNERS

A common thread throughout the consultation was the importance of including the right stakeholders from the design, during inception and throughout the initiative. Given the intersectional nature of VAWG, the inclusion of diverse partners in joint initiatives on EVAWG, including across movements, ensures that a variety of perspectives are considered. This is crucial to maximize impact. Most importantly, “survivors must be at the core”. This comment by a key stakeholder was echoed throughout the consultation process. Women and girls who are survivors of violence should inform any joint intervention and have their voices amplified so that their needs are properly understood and can then be met. They are also powerful advocates who can accelerate impact on EVAWG.

- A change in perspective can occur when teaming up with another organization, particularly one with a different focus. Innovative approaches with strong impact can result from new connections. As one informant stated, “We need to bring on board a wider perspective to define response to VAWG. Almost all stakeholders in this space play a role”. Another warned, “Do not leave out other key people you are not aware of - ask ‘what’s the lay of the land beyond my little piece?’ If you don’t do this you could just be rehashing what’s already been done, and I’ve seen that a lot.” For example, in Malawi, a joint initiative

between the Ministry of Education with UN Women involved an activity with the Centre for Community Resource Mobilization whereby traditional leaders were engaged to consider the impact of girls dropping out from school due to pregnancy and child marriage. The traditional leaders formulated by-laws to try to end VAWG and in the specific districts where they engaged, there was a reduction in negative attitudes towards women and girls and the by-laws introduced were associated with a drastic decrease in the dropout rate.

- Collaboration with government (as a formal implementing partner or in other ways) was seen as essential for the success of a joint initiative. Without political will at all levels, joint EVAWG initiatives will achieve less. Thus, joint programmes containing strategies to improve political will, and which include relevant government agencies from inception are most likely to succeed.

Stand-alone gender ministries were felt to increase the impact of joint initiatives on EVAWG and the creation of a separate Gender Ministry in Tanzania was shared as an example of increased political will, moving from under the Ministry of Health to a dedicated Ministry responsible for gender.

- For community interventions, the inclusion of local government was considered by respondents to be central to their success. Engendering or improving government buy-in and political will can be fostered by governmental inclusion at the earliest stages during programmatic design. The best outcomes arose from those supported and promoted by the government via multiple ministries from the decision to pursue a joint initiative. Where this existed, it facilitated greater civic space for and leadership by those most affected by the issues, including the involvement of women and youth-led grassroots organizations from the design phase onwards.

There are various country examples of this in the ESA region, from Uganda, where the government has adopted a multi-stakeholder approach to EVAWG, to Kenya or Malawi, with its multi-partner coordination structures on EVAWG, among others.

- The consultation process also suggested that public-private partnerships continued to be under-utilized. While such partnerships were mentioned by several participants as being good practice, there were scant examples of them. If more attention was given to incubating and nurturing such partnerships, meaningful innovation could accelerate change.
- Working through partnerships also offers the promise of linkage to actors not already engaged to support EVAWG work (including future financial support). For example, the Solidarity Fund set-up in South Africa to fund the National Strategic Plan is an example of leveraging private sector support for EVAWG. A key stakeholder from Uganda noted, “Cross-fertilization is a virtuous cycle. It’s a symbiotic relationship whereby through working with certain strategic women’s rights CSOs, we were able to exponentially magnify and accelerate the visibility of gender issues and VAWG”. She described how support to the Women’s Parliamentary Association in Uganda resulted in the passage of gender equality legislation and helped to increase the number of women in Parliament, including a female speaker of Parliament for the first time, a female Minister of Gender, and a female Vice-President. The latter led a push to design a national response on teenage pregnancies triggered by the COVID-19 lockdown. The joint voice galvanized a high level of visibility which gained speed and momentum and resources in only a few months.
- Partnering with grassroots women’s rights organizations was considered an essential aspect of the Spotlight Initiative’s success, given their understanding of the local context, what is working and what is not.

Moreover, through partnerships with such organizations and strengthening their capacities to engage with the UN and other development actor processes, the UN was able to build its own institutional capacity to engage with grassroots WROs, strategize and design activities to respond to the needs of diverse women and girls more effectively. Community-based organizations (CBOs) also help with continuity and sustainability beyond any joint initiative.

UN Women’s focused mandate as a champion for women and girls was considered as crucial to mitigate design and other challenges under the Spotlight Initiative. However, some words of warning were raised during the consultation in relation to ‘UN crowding’. Under Spotlight’s six pillar structure, multi-agency input is required across the pillars of focus.

UN Women’s mandate and operational experience placed it with a specific role and place at the table and the agency’s expertise and history of work on EVAWG undoubtedly helped to mitigate certain challenges. However, in a spirit of candour, several informant were critical of the fact that at times UN agencies or other entities appeared to seek involvement more due to ego than comparative advantage. Thus, while it is important to bring all relevant parties on board, this will require honesty and humility when leadership roles are decided. One informant shared a reflection on reaching women with disabilities, “we sometimes sideline them; sometimes we don’t have the capacity to bring them on board, even though they have a lot of lived experience.” What should be at the centre is the championing of women and girls themselves and creating the conditions for them to represent themselves rather than a focus on who is the organizational face of an initiative.

- Inter-generational interventions were described by some key stakeholders as having brought energy and creativity to joint initiatives. For example, a UN Women initiative, Innovators Against GBV, was found to be a very effective strategy in Zimbabwe.

A FGD participant commented that prior to the Spotlight Initiative, the youth were not as involved in work on EVAWG. It is important to note that several key informants and the literature mentioned some distrust between generations of advocates working across women's movements, with stalwarts considering the youth to lack passion and sincerity, and younger women considering older activists to be 'out of touch'. In this regard, efforts to foster dialogue and collaboration across age groups is an important investment and part of a whole of society approach that enables all individuals, across age groups and gender identities, to be involved in the struggle to end VAWG. Joint initiatives, if intentional, can help to enhance solidarity between them.

During the consultation, the approaches to male engagement in efforts aimed at transformative social norm change regarding VAWG were highlighted in different ways. There was no initiative that did not engage men in its approach, although some respondents emphasized the need for male inclusion as if initiatives did not include this, which might reflect a lack

of transformation resulting from the existing approaches.

Examples of activities involving male engagement tended to be targeted towards individual men in specific positions of power (for example, male traditional and church leaders or members of government, and peer-to-peer efforts). One FGD participant pointed out that "male engagement requires government engagement" which in turn leads to an enabling environment. The responses around male inclusion suggest there is a need for greater clarity within joint initiatives on how men are being included in a deliberate way which is accountable to women and girls and the agendas of feminist and women's rights organizations in relation to EVAWG. One effort to take a more intentional approach is the African Union Commission launch of its Circle of Champions on EVAWG in November 2022, through which Presidents who are taking action to end VAWG are invited to support the campaign. Another example is the Men Engage Alliance updated [Accountability Framework](#) for engaging men in EVAWG, with its [Core Principles, Code of Conduct](#), and [Accountability Standards](#).





ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

Localizing Solidarity and HeForShe in Zimbabwe

In Matabeleland, UN Women’s solidarity movement and HeForShe were localized, increasing the number of boys and men involved. Individual examples were shared of local traditional leaders who were reported to have stood up for women and girls, urging the end of both GBV and child marriage. A FGD participant shared how “results [of joint work] have been profound”. In one example, a family had accepted the bride price for a child, the wedding date was set, an animal was slaughtered, and food was ready. Yet a male traditional leader mobilised numerous male and female gender champions including within the ministries and the police, and they all went to the homestead and prevented the marriage going ahead. In another example, a chief suggested that there should be at least one female traditional leader, challenging the cultural norms which did not create space for women’s leadership. When one of the male traditional leaders passed away, the chief insisted on a woman replacing him, because he had committed to HeForShe.

Such examples are a starting point for examining how individual male advocates in positions of power might contribute to wider changes in promoting gender equitable social norms and wider community transformation and the limitations of individual actions from triggering wider change.

Partnerships are at the core of joint initiatives and as such, the level of attention and investment in determining which partners are reached and how partners are engaged in any EVAWG effort directly affects the success of the initiative.

BUILD ON WHAT HAS ALREADY WORKED

Another matter which numerous stakeholders raised was building on what has come before. There is a need for a consistent approach and to continuously build upon knowledge and lessons learned, recognizing that no initiative operates in a vacuum. Situate any new EVAWG

initiatives in the wider context of actors and issues in the communities where the work will take place, but also in relation to what has happened in the past and an understanding of the evidence of what works to prevent VAWG. With this understanding, initiatives can make more strategic linkages with, build, and feed into successful previous ones, introducing new elements and innovation, as relevant. The use of already-existing structures and relationships, while not limiting the creation of new linkages, ensures greater ownership and fosters sustainability, values existing capacities and resources and saves money.

“It does not help to start an initiative this year and after three years we abandon it completely and start another one – we should be building on knowledge.” *Key Informant*

PURPOSEFUL PLANNING

The decision to engage jointly requires investment in a thorough planning process. This was abundantly clear from both the literature review and consultations. The excessive amount of time, human and financial resources required to ensure success in joint initiatives and to nurture creativity was repeatedly mentioned as a concern by participants. Several stakeholders lamented that their experiences with joint initiatives had taken up to two years to plan. Nonetheless, respondents were universal in the opinion that spending this time in the planning phase was both essential and worth the investment to ensure good results. Jointly agreed planning for the short-, mid- and long-term is more than a compliance process and vital for laying the foundations of institutional strengthening and equitable partnerships so that organizations can implement effective programmes. Such processes will clarify which resources are needed and where, exactly what each partner can contribute, expectations around accountability, and where additional support is required.

The deeply-rooted drivers of EVAWG coupled with the complexity of joint initiatives means that mapping the ecosystem of the work and setting a baseline is critical. Ideally, studies on national drivers of VAWG should be utilized to inform the initiative’s design and investment in baseline surveys as relevant during the inception period. Many key stakeholders highlighted a thorough mapping of the different

actors and efforts already underway, especially those conducting similar work - “moving away from the silo mentality”, as one interviewee said. One key informant suggested bringing in the National Statistics Office to contribute to the initiative alongside NGOs working on issues of EVAWG. This will reduce duplication and open the door to new collaborations with partners previously not considered or known.

Conducting a visioning process is a useful exercise to precede the development of a joint theory of change, identification of comparative advantages, a detailed framework setting out roles and responsibilities, rules of engagement and accountability (with inputs from all partners), as well as preparation of formal agreements for the joint initiative.

“We need a master workplan where you can go to one place and you can see what the Spotlight Initiative is doing, what the Joint Programme on GBV is doing, what the Joint Programme on FGM is doing. We are doing that through the Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the Joint Workplan and financing of the Workplan. So there, you can see the mapping of the various GBV programs, the resource allocation, who is working on what area and supporting in which geographical location and this is where now you can talk integration to say, ‘Okay, now let’s come to the table and see who’s got the beans. who’s got the cooking oil, who’s got the salt?’” *Key Informant*

A participant stated, “When you come together for these joint initiatives as a movement or coalition, there are certain expectations that partners come in with and diverse dynamics and characters to deal with. Without rules of engagement from the onset, you may encounter very many challenges that may affect the work you are trying to push for.”

Furthermore, clarity on roles and activities ensures value for money, avoids duplication, repetition and information-fatigue among communities. Dedicating enough time at this stage will also help to diminish the likelihood of misunderstandings or the build-up of resentment due to miscommunication and/or perceptions around unequal contributions and burdens (in terms of time, human and financial resources), which can break down partnerships and adversely affect impact. The propensity for this occurring within joint programmes was frequently observed by key stakeholders and suggests that sufficient time for buy-in and agreement on the terms of partnerships such as the division of labor, priority areas, governance, etc. is a prerequisite for the success of joint initiatives. All matters must be thoroughly discussed and agreed upon in the design and inception phases to mitigate the consequences of the inevitable conflict which might arise from misunderstandings.

Some stakeholders pointed to the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative as an example of a sound, comprehensive and effective design process. They highlighted that *all* programmatic processes of joint initiatives should be conducted jointly: planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting. In terms of governance, regular, substantive meetings should be included in the design of joint initiatives to build connections between partners, coordinate actions, avoid duplication and during implementation to assess progress.

Given the large-scale time investments required for successful joint initiatives, coupled with the multifaceted and pervasive nature of VAWG and the intransigence of patriarchal

views and harmful cultural practices, many participants criticized the three- to four-year donor cycle as far too short to result in concrete reductions in VAWG. Both donors and UN agencies must take cognizance of this, and pledge to be more flexible when considering programme length, outputs and outcomes and more direct channeling of resources to women’s rights organizations. As one key informant opined, “EVAWG is not a day’s job - results come even years after the intervention”.

LEVEL POWER DYNAMICS AND VALUE ALL MEMBERS

Often raised during the consultation was the need for awareness and understanding of power hierarchies between organizations or actors within joint initiatives and taking action to address these to protect against reduced impact and resentment later in the partnership. Differing power dynamics are inevitable, with larger organizations and/or those with greater finances often having a stronger voice or greater sway. Awareness of these dynamics is the first step towards making deliberate efforts to address them in structures of leadership and decision-making.

The best results arise when all partners feel valued, seen and heard, recognizing distinct experiences and perspectives. A foundation of trust, ensuring safe spaces to engage, and based on respect for diverse voices and experiences, is pivotal. When these elements are present, it makes collaboration easier because it helps to strengthen solidarity and leads to collective responsibility and allyship among the key stakeholders, which can be sustained over time. Effective joint initiatives were those which made visible all partners’ commitments and efforts, and which jointly celebrated results, however small.

The protective effect of coalitions for more vulnerable or marginalized partners was another positive result arising from joint EVAWG initiatives that was mentioned by some stakeholders.

For example, a key stakeholder from an organization of persons with disabilities emphasized that partners in joint initiatives were understood to have a support structure around them which would ensure that justice for human rights abuses was obtained. Other respondents shared the importance of joint initiatives and coalitions to buffer the backlash faced by women human rights defenders in many African countries and globally to ensure their safety when working on EVAWG, with protection not only from the community, but also via government partners.

Finally, as joint initiatives bring different partners together and draw from a variety of perspectives and areas of expertise, capacity development on various programming aspects was acknowledged as a key component of joint initiatives to ensure sustainability. This investment needs to begin in programme design and carried throughout the initiative's lifespan, including through the uptake of research and evidence as well as the investment in practice-based learning. The approach to learning should be both substantive (for example, how to deliver evidence-based prevention interventions in holistic ways) as well as ways of working jointly (such as how to jointly design and coordinate processes where partners have different programmatic power, or how to ensure marginalized groups can meaningfully inform decisions, or where partners do not have the same understanding of VAWG). As one key informant indicated, "this will give CSOs confidence that they are leaving communities with the best know-how at local level, with initiatives being driven by the community itself, ensuring every group within the community is represented". Accordingly, mentorship and learning need to be at the core of joint initiatives, embedded from the planning phase onwards.

(3) Influencing factors

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

In a recent corporate evaluation of UN Women's System Coordination role in relation to EVAWG, instances of effective individual leadership were found to improve results.^{vii} This was also noted by stakeholders to contribute to better results within joint initiatives. The way individuals holding power use their leadership position can help level power dynamics between different partners and serve as a deliberate driver to continuously encourage collaboration and strong coordination. One key informant pointed out, "in the UN, leadership and personalities make a difference." Another respondent noted that "good coordination, even within a diverse and inclusive platform, can strengthen the bond between partners."

Accordingly, leadership where relationships are valued can be seen as an essential element to achieve better results. The importance of leadership extended to the need for support from senior management to advocate for and/or invest in capacity development, experiential learning, and community engagement. However, leadership must also bring humility and collective accountability into relationships, so that the success of joint initiatives is not placed at the expense of one person or a lead organization doing much more than other partners. Accountability between partners is important to establish at the planning stage.

There is also the need for a much more deliberate coordinating body...to be able to bring everybody on board, not just for the sake of convening, but to leverage on each other's strengths, capacities, capability, comparative advantage" *Key Informant*

ADEQUATE AND QUALITY RESOURCE PROVISION

Good planning will include appropriate resource allocation. The issue of funding came up repeatedly in numerous contexts during the consultation.

The importance of ensuring that adequate financial contributions are in place to support the work cannot be overstated. At the highest level, if the scope of the vision is not supported by the available resources, it is critical to adjust it to ensure the ambition is realistic.

Attention on the quality of funding is also an important aspect of resourcing. Funding women's rights organizations, including grassroots and smaller organizations, was mentioned as a barrier to joint initiatives (where organizations are unable to engage or believe that collaboration will risk their access to resources), but also as an opportunity for more effective interventions.

Historically, women's rights organizations have been under-resourced despite their role at the forefront of EVAWG efforts.

The required allocation of a minimum percentage of resources for civil society organizations, prioritizing women's rights and grassroots organizations as well as the inclusion of diverse CSOs working on EVAWG as part of the governance structure under the Spotlight Initiative are examples of how joint initiatives can ensure adequate funding is channeled to the organizations best able to meet the needs of women and girls affected by violence.

At the same time, the sustainability of resourcing EVAWG requires ensuring government ownership and engagement. For this reason, several key stakeholders emphasized the importance of bringing donors and the Treasury into discussions early in the process. As one stakeholder stated, "Let's co-create with both women's rights organizations and those who hold the purse-strings. Then everyone gets to understand how this [initiative] could better serve their own agendas within the sector and in the country." Another commented, "The funding is never enough, but when you have collaboration, organizing meetings is easier

through pooled resources". Disagreements on finances had been observed to result in resentment within certain joint initiatives, cause rifts, and break down partnerships.

A participant from Zimbabwe warned, "By coming together with a partner, organizations ask if there is money for that engagement, and whether they are in it to be 'exploited'".

On a practical level, adequate resources can also influence the level of partner engagement, for example, to ensure regular meetings take place. One individual consulted pointed out that the Spotlight Initiative had quite substantial funding, and without resources to support "the convenings, the technical support could not be done." As illustrated by the Spotlight Initiative model, more joined-up planning and implementation can result in increased funds overall, either through pooling or by leveraging partnerships and achievements to obtain larger funding commitments.

MAXIMIZE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Awareness of comparative advantage is also imperative for the success of joint initiatives. Intersectional complementarity across movements adds value and tends to lead to greater programme ownership. Understanding and utilizing the expertise of different partners during collective work can leverage each partner's capacities as well as build synergies between actors. For example, grassroots women's organisations should take the lead at community level using a strong feminist approach, partnering with others not only at national policy level, but with those at intermediary levels who have strengths in policy implementation and documentation. The all-encompassing nature of work on EVAWG means that there is space for every partner to engage and awareness of what each can bring to the table may be needed at different stages, leveraging the comparative advantage of different stakeholders at the national and local levels. Additionally, recognition of the value of and comparative advantage of each partner is required not only to ensure respectful interaction, but also to make best use of lean resources.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS REVIEW

The importance of good documentation for joint initiatives can be instrumental to shape the effectiveness of EVAWG work in terms of both processes and outcomes. Each initiative's monitoring efforts must involve an intentional focus on improving the quality of data on GBV and documentation of results and barriers to achieving results. Indeed, it is vital that all partners see what is working, who is doing what, where and what the initiative is changing.

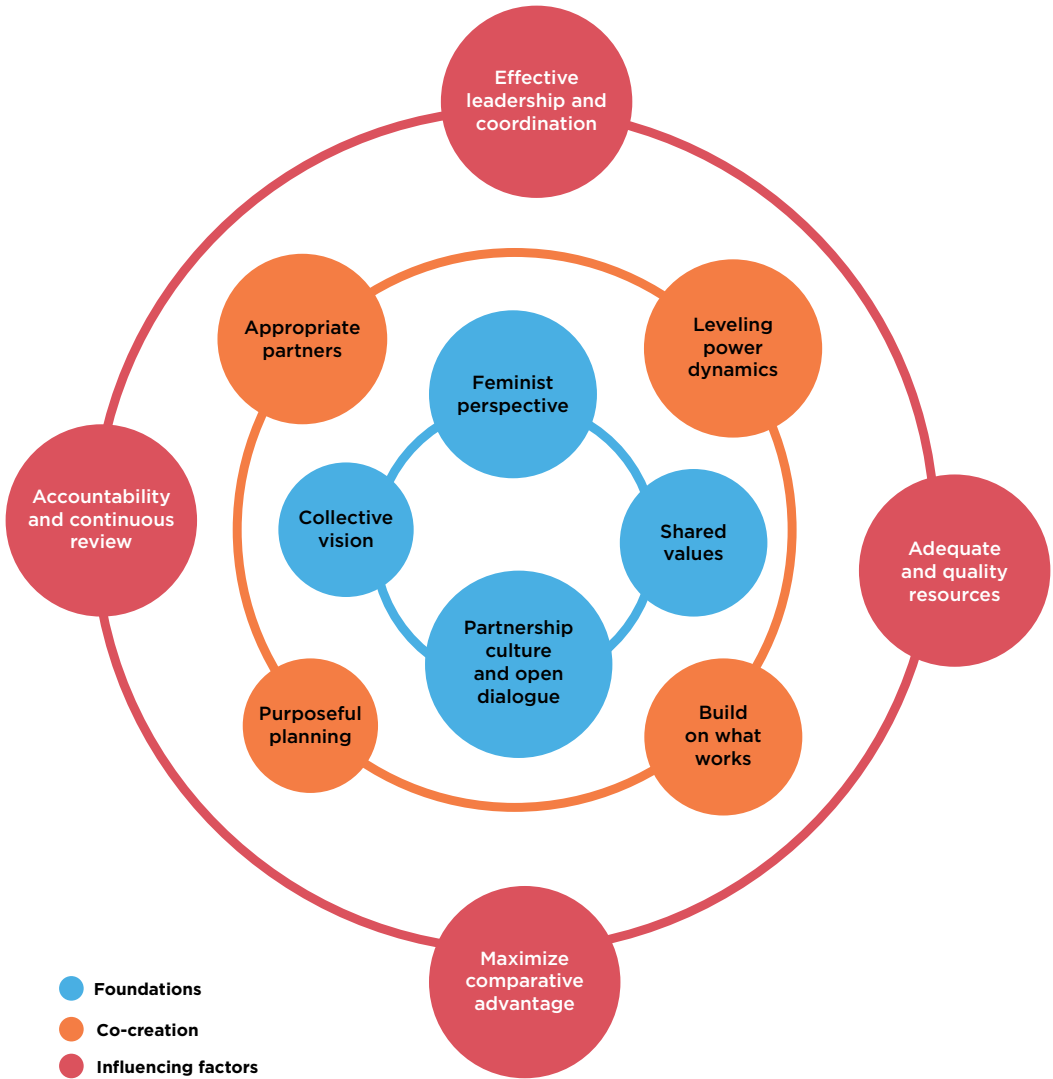
This also extends to information-sharing and dissemination between joint actors, with the dual advantage of limiting duplication and ensuring that all are working towards similar goals. For example, one participant recommended that a consolidated data sheet can reduce duplication of data on stakeholders reached by a particular initiative. Partners need to be open and committed to sharing information, with each partner holding the others accountable, and tracking results to enable progress within joint initiatives. For example, in Tanzania, there was joint coordination at policy level, when reviewing the development of the successor plans to the National Plan of Action on EVAWG, with increased funding, coherence on key messaging and enhanced technical support. While coordination and monitoring with the government is a vital part of strengthening accountability, it is important to not limit monitoring to what is captured by existing data systems, recognizing there are key groups within a community, such as

persons with disabilities, displaced persons or others who might not be recognized or missing within the systems due to discrimination and marginalization.

Periodic assessment of any project is important to ensure that it is kept on track and adjustments can be made as changes in the context occur to ensure better progress, which can be facilitated through a monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) plan in joint programmes. One participant emphasized that there need to be checks to ensure this is happening throughout programme implementation, not just at the tail-end. This is particularly critical for assessing the impact of initiatives aimed at ending VAWG, which is a complex and non-linear process, whereby the dynamics of change within joint initiatives which are distinct from those implemented by a single entity. The Spotlight Initiative was appreciated for having a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, meeting regularly twice a year specifically to assess progress and gaps. For example, under the leadership of the Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development in Uganda, a key stakeholder noted that the initiative had achieved approximately 90 per cent of what was planned. At the same time, it is crucial that monitoring efforts strengthen institutional systems for monitoring rather than only project-specific frameworks.

Figure 2 below illustrates the elements found to be key aspects of effective joint EVAWG initiatives.

FIGURE 2.
Essential components of successful joint initiatives





COLLABORATION
AND SOLIDARITY
IN JOINT EVAWG
INITIATIVES

Setting the conceptual framework around collaboration and solidarity

The concepts of collaboration as well as solidarity were included as important and distinct areas of exploration in the study, recognizing that collaboration can take place between a few organizations without the development of solidarity or the shared sense of connection around a common belief. Similarly, there can be organizations working in solidarity on a particular issue, even in the absence of collaboration between the actors.

Through the study, it was noted that there was relatively limited attention to either of the concepts in the programmatic literature on joint EVAWG initiatives reviewed. Considering this context, the Research Team developed a working definition for each of the terms tailored to the application in joint initiatives to frame the discussions in consistent ways.

The literature review findings were reinforced through the discussions with stakeholders, where few examples were provided of joint initiatives with intentional objectives around strengthening either collaboration or solidarity, suggesting that there has been limited investment in these approaches within joint EVAWG initiatives.

“It’s very difficult to collaborate and seek to synergize where you are not convinced of the necessity for such collaboration.” Key Informant

Working Definitions

Collaboration:

“Individuals or groups (including institutions, organizations, or networks) working in a cooperative way on a particular task or towards a particular result which may be a time-bound or an ongoing relationship”.^{viii}

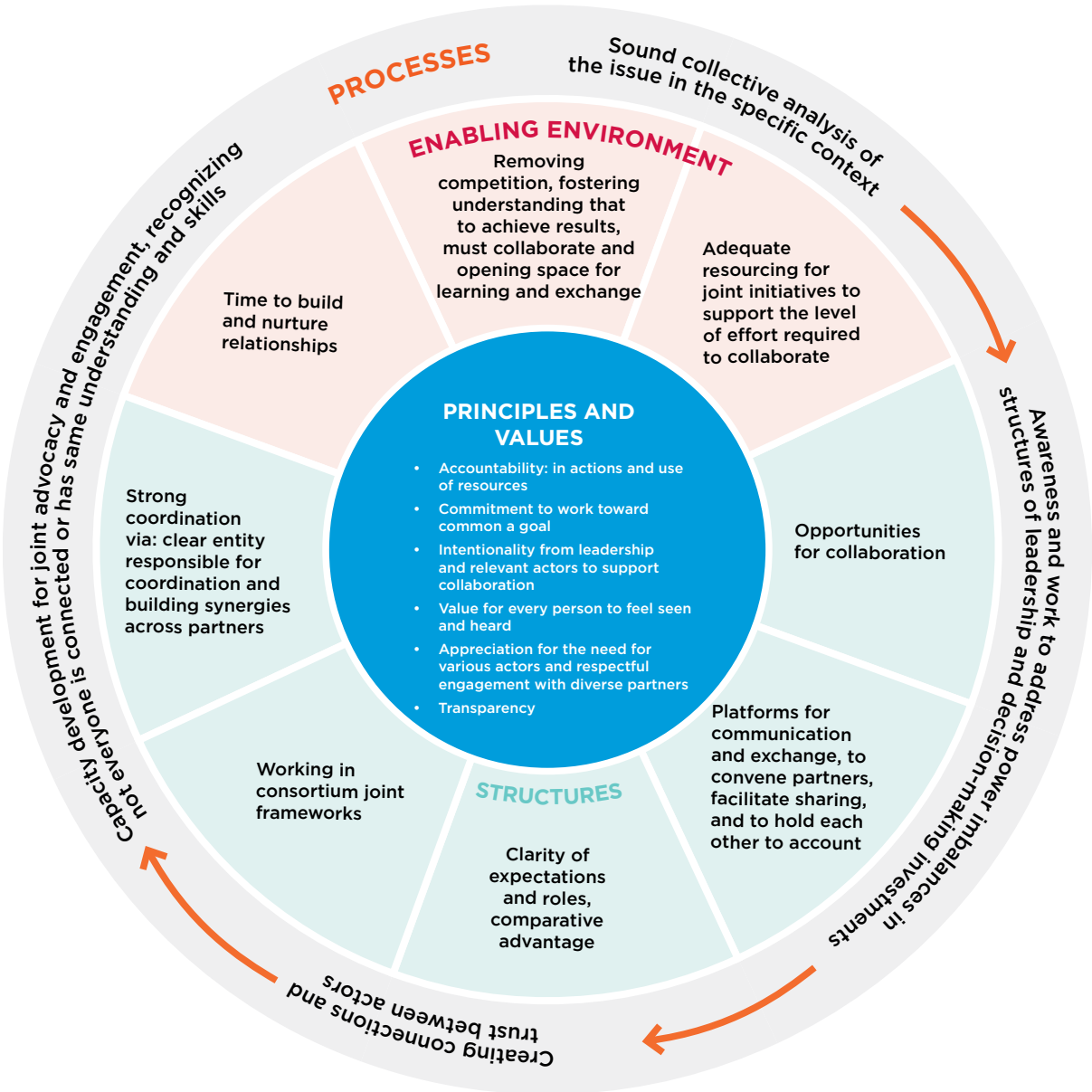
Solidarity:

A “bond on the basis of shared resources and strength” and “a community of interests which can encompass individuals, organizations, and networks with common interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite based on understanding of differences and exchange of experiences”.^{ix}

During the data collection, the challenge of identifying the conceptual differences between solidarity and collaboration surfaced in the discussions, and the terms were at times used interchangeably in the interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), despite the use of working definitions. This is understandable given the linkages between solidarity and collaboration and lack of attention to the concepts within initiatives. In this regard, in some instances, the need to collaborate to make inroads on ending VAWG was put forward as most essential, whereas in others, growing solidarity across actors was prioritized in a particular context. Nevertheless, stakeholders shared various examples of the factors within joint initiatives that either advanced or limited collaboration and solidarity.

Overall, consultations pointed to a set of principles and values, structures and processes within joint initiatives, as well as an enabling environment that contribute to good collaboration and solidarity, as illustrated in Figure 3 below. There are some elements that overlap with the characteristics of effective joint initiatives, reinforcing their importance for successful EVAWG efforts. The contribution of each area for collaboration and solidarity is described in more detail to illustrate the value of investing in these elements.

FIGURE 3.
Ingredients for strengthening solidarity and collaboration



Understanding collaboration and joint initiatives on EVAWG, including across movements

The research team sought to explore the relevance and impact of collaboration within joint initiatives for EVAWG using four sub-questions:

- (i) Do joint initiatives improve collaboration?
- (ii) Does collaboration increase impact for EVAWG?
- (iii) How important is cross-movement collaboration within joint initiatives? and
- (iv) What factors contribute to strengthening collaboration in joint initiatives?

In terms of relevance, the need for effective collaboration within joint initiatives is obvious: it prevents the waste of funds, resources and effort, and fosters good relationships and trust. Both of these contribute positively to the overall aim of ending violence against women and girls. In regard to impact, a 2021 corporate evaluation of UN Women's System Coordination role on EVAWG found that individual efforts to build collaborative relationships improved results, as visible through the UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence and the Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls.^x

Overwhelmingly, when asked to rate the importance of collaboration, stakeholders shared the view that collaboration is essential for the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives, calling attention to the diversity of efforts and power of the collective to bring about action. As one informant shared, "more voices coming together to end VAWG amplify the voice of survivors of GBV and compel decision-makers to act towards putting in place requisite measures". Related to this, joint activism and cross-movement building needs to be envisioned and nurtured from the very start.

Elements to improve collaboration

The research identified numerous aspects of joint initiatives which improved collaboration. These link to values and principles that organizations espouse, as well as structures and processes and the wider environment in which they operate, similar to the elements which make joint initiatives successful.

- **Valuing collaboration:** Importantly, when there is a recognition of the need to collaborate, joint work is likely to be more effective. As one key informant shared, "We recognise this work needs all hands on deck and there's space for all of us. And we have more power when we come together." This also recognizes the scale of the problem and the slow progress to date.

Accordingly, there is a need to identify new ways of approaching the problem and to move away from working in silos. Collaboration is particularly effective when the respective actors have an appreciation of the need for engagement with a diversity of partners. It is especially important that the belief in collaboration begins at the top. A key informant stated, "When the leadership is clear and gets the right tone, it's cascaded". The benefits of government institutions or donors acting as catalysts of collaboration were also shared, where in these instances, the power and influence of the government or donor facilitated the actors to work more collaboratively. However, for engagement to be most effective, the partners must be willing, enthusiastic and involved as joint implementers.

- **Prioritizing inclusion and platforms to challenge power imbalances:** Collaboration can be fostered when joint initiatives have space for learning and exchange. As mentioned earlier, leveling power dynamics is crucial so that smaller organizations are given equal voice. This will help to ensure that organizations representing the groups most marginalized or the most affected by violence are equally valued and recognized in joint work. For example, in Malawi, an intervention by Engender Health as well as the Spotlight Initiative took specific steps throughout the initiatives to engage persons with disabilities and persons with albinism in their initiatives, recognizing the increasing violence faced by these groups within the community. In this regard, it is equally important to support both the formal and informal processes that strengthen collaboration, beginning with individual relationships.
 - **Accountability and transparency:** The importance of communicating and acting with integrity was also identified as a key element to ensure the success of a joint initiative. This relates to how resources are shared between organizations, but also in relation to actions toward the objectives and having processes to hold to account partners who are not meeting their obligations
- on implementation. Where there was low accountability, either to other partners, or to women and girl survivors of violence, programmes faltered. An example of the structure within South Africa’s National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide was shared, which has clear responsibilities of Departments around different pillars of action and expectations regarding timelines and mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on progress.
- **Understanding comparative advantages and roles:** The need for clarity in roles and the value addition of different partners was noted multiple times by stakeholders. This can reduce and ideally eliminate harmful competition between organizations by fostering understanding among actors on the benefits of collaboration in terms of results. It is important to have an awareness of the ‘bigger picture’ and who else is doing the work we are doing. When the competition is removed; people are bound to learn”, said one key informant.
 - **Common priorities:** Defining a common agenda and priorities is also essential for collaboration, with many participants noting that when results were focused, there was more likelihood of success.



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE - RWANDA

“When you are together in a coalition, in partnership, and have one voice, then it is easy. For example, the Government of Rwanda published its COVID recovery plan, the women’s rights movement came together under SDG5 to assess the plan’s inclusivity for disability under the SDG Agenda. We found it was not disability inclusive and put out our statement; our recommendation was understood. Although the plan was half-way through, in the second plan, all those recommendations were taken into account.”...“Sometimes when people are not coming together and coordinated, and everyone is scattered in a corner somewhere, defining their own issue, our governments are confused: ‘whom are we going to listen to?’ Because everyone is coming to the table with a different issue. So coming together in a joint initiative should really be strategic for advocacy and change at an institutional level.” Key Informant

- Supportive structures and coordination:** The need for strong coordination and platforms for facilitating collaboration was repeated by stakeholders and evident from the literature review. Successful joint initiatives have an entity responsible for coordination and building synergies, recognizing that effective coordination strengthens connections between actors. Strong coordination was vital to make best use of comparative advantages across different partners and eliminate waste and duplication. Donors should be included within such coordination. The importance of government leadership within any joint initiative was highlighted, as well as the need for differing government entities, UN agencies and local and international organizations taking the coordination lead in areas relevant to their varying expertise. This is also true in terms of the strategic role delegated to a Secretariat or consortium during the design phase. A ministry representative from Uganda stated, “We stand to benefit more, working as a team... We strengthen each other... CSOs may advocate for changes, but without Government, they are not able to collaborate efficiently.”
- Resourcing collaboration:** The time, resources and investment required for effective coordination, which in turn affects the quality of collaboration, is often undervalued as the quality of relationships is not measured. When planning, sufficient resources are necessary to convene different partners and facilitate the various processes for effective engagement between them. Shortcuts to these processes will adversely affect an initiative’s results.

Collaboration across movements

There were not so many examples provided during the consultation on how joint initiatives could support collaboration across movements. However, the examples given both from initiatives focused on ending VAWG and in other sectors reinforced the enabling factors facilitating collaboration generally, as set out above. Similar to the query on working at sub-regional or cross-country levels, cross-movement collaboration with activist allies in other sectors is an area for further exploration, and carried out effectively, could amplify innovation, impact and ultimately accelerate progress on EVAWG.

“You see, collaboration is like this: ‘Let’s go together to feed the hungry village’. But...we might both take mielie meal because we’ve just said, ‘let’s share the truck and we go’. So the villager now has two sacks of mielie meal without the meat. But when you are coordinated, there is a function within that which says, ‘what are you bringing? I’m bringing mielie meal’. ‘And what are you bringing?’ ‘I’m bringing mielie meal.’ ‘You can’t bring mielie meal because it’s already provided! We want you to bring meat.” *Key Informant.*



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

Expanding engagement for improved impact on EVAWG in Uganda

The Spotlight Initiative was repeatedly referenced as having demonstrated its efficacy. Connecting UN agencies in a more systematic way to provide technical expertise enables multi-angled consideration of the issue. For example, there were high teenage pregnancies in Uganda (almost a quarter of a million) between 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 lockdown. The government's immediate response was to try to get girls back to school and provide contraception. However, the UNFPA's involvement highlighted that teenage girls were having unprotected sex which is the age group with the highest increases in rates of HIV infection. As one respondent noted, the approach to "team up with another programme, like the programme on HIV and AIDS, suddenly you realize that there's another chunk of programming that you might have been oblivious to because your focus does not include that specific aspect. HIV is referred to as part of an intersectional vulnerability in passing. It can change the way you structure integration."

Strengthening multi-stakeholder solidarity

Complementing the importance of collaboration in joint initiatives, the research explored whether solidarity was essential for joint initiatives on EVAWG to be effective, and how joint initiatives contributed to strengthening solidarity between and across organizations and movements. As noted earlier, solidarity was conceptualized adapting from a framing by the author and activist Bell Hooks, as a

"bond on the basis of shared resources and strength" and "a community which can encompass individuals, organizations, and networks with common interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite based on understanding of differences and exchange of experiences".^{xi}

When asked to rate the importance of solidarity linked to the effectiveness of joint initiatives on EVAWG, the overwhelming opinion expressed by key informants (84 per cent) and 100 per cent of FGD participants was that solidarity is essential to their success: "From a movement-building point of view, solidarity is essential. Without it, the programme is lifeless as soon as it ends," reflected a key informant.

Specifically, the collective voice that comes with solidarity makes success in reaching shared objectives more likely. Connections across actors working in solidarity can strengthen the quality of the work and enhance passion and commitment on the issue of EVAWG, thereby strengthening (or building) the movement.

Another point made was that solidarity between actors can enable more comprehensive responses to violence. This brings the efforts of various partners together so that they can more effectively solve problems, as opposed to working in a fragmented fashion.

Another positive aspect of solidarity is the nurturing and protective effect on individuals and organizations. Work on EVAWG can be threatening as it seeks to disrupt entrenched power imbalances. If working in isolation, actors can feel frustration and despondency - and, ultimately, burnout.

For example, several respondents spoke about the threats that women human rights defenders were facing in different contexts and the value of organizations working as allies and in solidarity to make sure that these advocates receive protection from the community. Others mentioned that there are government and community protection mechanisms for actors on EVAWG who might face threats due to their

work with victims. In general, when solidarity is strengthened, there is mutual support. This can be critical for sustaining efforts beyond a programme or project lifespan. The need to make visible the initiative's achievements was also highlighted so that advancements could be seen and felt by all partners and help counter frustrations arising from slow progress on EVAWG.

“Without a bond you will not be invested. If there is nothing to connect you, there will not be success. It is really essential for you to share a bond - that will carry through when there are no resources and you will think of innovate ways.” *Key Informant*

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

SOAWR and regional solidarity

The Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) Coalition was founded in 2004, aimed at ensuring that African policymakers prioritized the rights of women and girls articulated in the Maputo Protocol (which came into force in November 2004). SOAWR started a campaign (the All for Maputo Protocol Initiative (AMPI) to push governments to sign, ratify, domesticate and implement the Protocol. There are now over 50 members in 27 countries on the continent. With Equality Now acting as Secretariat, CSOs come together for capacity-development activities which helps strengthen solidarity and opens doors to collaboration, opportunities with other local NGOs on ratification, domestication and implementation of the Maputo Protocol. Although there is room for more joint work nationally, the regional initiative helped to propel individual CSOs forward in their own goals of ending VAWG.

Elements which strengthen multi-stakeholder EVAWG solidarity

Similar to the findings on collaboration, the research found that organizations and actors with shared values of accountability, transparency and respect for diversity can strengthen their connection with other partners in their EVAWG efforts. For example, when organizations and their personnel embody accountability to zero tolerance for violence, are transparent in relation to their resources, and leave space for actors to have differences in opinion and approaches to the work, they might be more likely to see the linkage with others operating in similar ways.

- **A clear purpose:** The most common element identified across stakeholders was the need for a clear purpose and vision. Solidarity can grow from this clarity of the goal and as one key informant put it, *“you cannot have a common agenda without a common purpose”*. The idea of a common vision requires a shared understanding of the issue or consensus on the problem, as well as a shared interest in addressing VAWG. The vision must be informed by a sound collective analysis of the specific contexts in which the work is being done and the collective actions required to reach the intended results. This will enable improved understanding of the synergies, complementarity, and added value of diverse actors, contributing to a sense of connection between efforts.
- **Understanding of power structures and systems:** Stakeholders also recognized the need for actors to conduct a strong analysis of the power dynamics, leadership and decision-making structures which perpetuate violence against women and girls. This awareness of power imbalances in the broader social environment is a prerequisite to taking action to address them. One key stakeholder highlighted the importance of understanding systemic patriarchy, stating, *“The women’s movement challenges a very powerful system. That strengthens solidarity.”* The absence of an understanding of the operating environment and political consciousness was also noted as a threat to solidarity and contributed to internal fractures between organizations; a significant challenge identified.
- **Willingness to engage:** Multi-stakeholder solidarity is also strengthened from a willingness of actors to engage and be open to shifting their perspectives and to share power with others. For every person to feel seen and heard, with their distinct experiences and perspectives on issues reflected in the common efforts, each actor needs to recognize and value what others can offer towards the common objective. They must also commit to creating connections and trust between actors - in particular, looking beyond the individuals and organizations with whom they already work. The foundation of this engagement starts with personal relationships, feeling kindred and tapping into shared experiences, which may not always be formalized and should be nurtured over time; relationships evolve, and do not remain static. As one stakeholder shared, *“It is important to clarify expectations with a win-win approach in mind. Building solidarity through a joint initiative yields a better response than the sum of individual actions”*.

“Solidarity is a strong bond and can stand the test of time. VAWG is still with us, there is economic exploitation and violence at work, but when we bond, we strengthen the work around EVAWG, and we make huge progress.” Key Informant

- **Investing in inclusion:** Multiple stakeholders highlighted the need to make sure ‘the right people’ are at the table. Examples were shared where smaller organizations, and particularly those representing minorities or the most affected by VAWG, are not recognized for their knowledge, approaches, and potential as partners. Initiatives which have strengthened solidarity made intentional efforts to partner, nurture relationships and create space for diverse voices to be heard and influence the collective work. The success of solidarity arises not from sameness, but from each stakeholder working from their strengths or comparative advantage was also shared.

The importance of growing solidarity between actors at different levels of change or entry points was highlighted in various examples and suggests the importance of understanding solidarity as fluid and relational rather than as a linear set of steps. For instance, increasing intergenerational dialogue in Sudan was seen as critical to strengthen EVAWG efforts through ensuring the inclusion of the perspectives of young leaders and advocates. In several countries, identifying allies within the government, including but not limited to those from the Ministry of Gender, was emphasized as necessary to make progress on EVAWG. For example, women’s community-based organisations (CBOs) might lead activities under a joint initiative within the community using a strong feminist approach, and at the same time, others might focus efforts around policy and documentation while others simultaneously operate at national level.

- **Structures for solidarity:** Structures which contribute to solidarity include working in a consortium and having joint frameworks through which different actors can come together. Such structures require time to build connections and also allow diverse partners to find space for themselves as part of the collective.

These structures also facilitate processes for building clarity on the expectations, roles and responsibilities of and between different actors and the boundaries and scope of each stakeholder’s work. This was repeatedly described as vital to prevent both duplication and tensions between actors, especially where multiple partners are working on the same aspect.

- **Coordination mechanisms and platforms:** Having good coordination was identified multiple times as a factor contributing to both collaboration and solidarity. Individuals with coordination roles need to be cognizant of the importance of cultivating connections and relationships, and bridging gaps between actors in order to maximize the potential of joint initiatives. To facilitate solidarity among actors, it was emphasized that there needed to be spaces for communication and exchange, both physical and virtual, for actors to strategize, share, learn together and monitor developments on EVAWG. The spaces may be convened and facilitated, or alternatively evolve more organically based on need. Social media was also identified as a channel and tool to strengthen solidarity and solidify cohesive efforts for EVAWG.
- **Opportunities for collaboration:** The very process of creating joint initiatives where different actors can undertake joint analysis and planning, share ideas for action, and partner for joint implementation, monitoring, fundraising and advocacy contributes to solidarity.

For example, the 16 Days of Activism was named by several key informants as a moment where various stakeholders come together to support joint advocacy. These opportunities might relate to existing local, national, regional or international commitments on EVAWG.

Similarly, coming together where there is patriarchal or other pushback can allow movement members to reflect on what has worked and come to agreement on how best to handle matters. The process can also facilitate collective reflection and the generation of new solutions.

- **Strengthening capacities for solidarity:** As the number of actors working on EVAWG continues to grow, it is important to recognize that not everyone is connected. Similarly, even if there is an intention to collaborate, no single perspective is complete or 'correct' given the complexity involved in EVAWG, and not everyone shares the same values or has the skills for joint advocacy and engagement. Various stakeholders mentioned the importance of having players with certain skills helping to orchestrate joint initiatives and particular actions as foundational and/or key to success. These important elements included transformative leadership, trust-building, perspective-taking, intersectional analysis and inclusion, conflict resolution and coordination, as well as sound documentation and reporting to promote partner accountability on developments.
- **Resourcing solidarity:** Forging connections and relationships between diverse actors requires specific financial, human and time resources. When investments in these areas are not made, the results will fall short of expectations. As mentioned above, adequate resourcing of joint initiatives specifically with a view to growing solidarity is essential. This requires donors and ministries determining funding allocations to understand the importance of solidarity for return on their respective investments and make the relevant allocations on this from inception.

Cross-movement solidarity

Overall, there were relatively few joint initiatives with an explicit aim of fostering cross-movement solidarity. The research suggests that there is a less intentional approach within joint EVAWG initiatives to working across movements, although there were some examples where circumstances facilitated cross-movement solidarity and had positive results. Given the increasing recognition of the need for intersectionality in development programmes generally, and the multi-dimensional nature of VAWG, this gap reflects the disconnect between commitments on paper and investments to help make those commitments a reality. Similarly, it is unclear to what degree existing cross-movement collaboration is helpful in creating positive change, and this area could be explored further with stakeholders. Furthermore, the forging of new linkages can spur the innovation needed to make an impact on VAWG.

It has already been seen that increased collaboration can bring together resources and expertise, including within government institutions, resulting in joint accountability and impact when addressing GBV. If more inclusive efforts are made across movements in accordance with the SDGs and its principle of leaving no-one behind, the acceleration of positive change on EVAWG seems much more plausible. For example, the review indicated that multi-stakeholder approaches which unite diverse actors around policy advocacy messages and partnerships with government institutions often lead to increased uptake in knowledge products and platforms, with the potential for more commitment on EVAWG and thus increased impact.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE



Malawi - Spotlight Initiative

In Malawi, the Spotlight Initiative focused on movement-building for EVAWG, with key allies such as youth, traditional authorities, and religious entities. This contributed to the launch of a Young Feminists Network, creating space for the voices of young women and other marginalised populations to be heard. The programme led to the formation of powerful community alliances, with inroads on transforming attitudes and behaviors relating to SGBV and harmful practices. Spotlight also brought together 53 journalists from different media outlets across the country to create the Malawi Media Network, recognizing the power in collective voices.



Zimbabwe - cross-movement solidarity-strengthening

The SRHR and VAW Movements have come together to address VAWG and valuable learning came from the collaboration. During the review of the Termination of Pregnancy Act, which was mainly focused on SRHR, there was a discussion on the situation of survivors of VAWG and coordination between the HIV and EVAWG movements. Zimbabwe had criminalized willful transmission of HIV, and due to their reproductive roles, women were the first to know their HIV status because of mandatory HIV testing during pregnancy.

As a result, women were being prosecuted and brought to court for willful transmission and accused of infecting their husbands when they would find out that they were positive. As a result, the law needed to change, so the connection between the movements helped to shift the review of the Act. There are also collaborations across economic empowerment and EVAWG efforts and issue-specific coalitions recognizing the importance of working together to address one specific issue. Organizations are also members of each other's coalitions and campaigns, such as FEMNET's programmes and strategies to strengthen women's movements across Africa to address issues of GBV linking also to the Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC).

Other examples of regional initiatives or efforts which aim to foster cross-movement collaboration within joint EVAWG initiatives mentioned during the consultation process include the following:

- The Gender is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) Civil Society Gender Forum.
- The African Women Leaders Network (AWLN)
- Equality Now's Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) in support of the ratification and implementation of the Maputo Protocol.
- The African Women's Development Fund's work to support women's movements.
- Disabled Women in Africa (DIWA) which convenes networks of women with disabilities.

- Cross-border initiatives, such as those working on ending FGM and EVAWG more broadly.
- The African Union Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation (FemWise-Africa).
- The African Union Presidential Initiative for Positive Masculinities, and specifically the Circle of Champions.

In summary, the research found numerous elements which strengthened multi-stakeholder EVAWG collaboration and solidarity. However, few joint initiatives described during the consultation appeared to have an explicit aim to strengthen partnerships through the building of solidarity and collaboration, including through cross-movement partnerships. Given the similarities between the characteristics of effective joint initiatives and elements which promote collaboration and solidarity, the value of investment in these areas is clear.



CHALLENGES
AND LESSONS
LEARNED

The challenges preventing joint initiatives on EVAWG from being more effective, including barriers to collaboration and solidarity, are linked to a weakness in or the absence of the elements identified as essential for effective joint work. They can be organized into three distinct but connected areas:

- 1) environmental factors in the EVAWG ecosystem;
- 2) organizational values and structures; and
- 3) processes for engagement in joint initiatives.

“When there are resources in the mix, it creates competition - you end up not having coherence - you have competition for resources, jostling to make sure that one organization gets funds. This is unfortunate.” *Key Informant*

1. Environmental factors in the EVAWG ecosystem

The most common challenge shared across stakeholders was the **competition for resources** and to a lesser degree, the **competition for visibility** among actors engaged in joint initiatives. This creates significant barriers for joint initiatives to succeed and is illustrated through the following reflections:

- “When there's fierce competition for a limited pot of resources, this creates distrust and means people will be less likely to come together.”
- “The fight for resources is big. When we make organizations compete amongst themselves, it takes away from solidarity.”
- “They do not want to collaborate because they think they will lose out on funding.”

The concern over competition is also closely linked to the **insufficient funding that exists for EVAWG** and the practical, operational needs of organizations working on the issue. In 2019, research by the Association of Women's Rights in Development (AWID) found that only 1 per cent of gender equality funding goes to women's rights work. According to AWID, multilateral and bilateral agencies account for much of this funding (27 per cent), with only 4 per cent being self-generated through subscriptions. Funding is further reduced and lost in the allocation of resources for gender-mainstreaming. Similarly, research on the effect of COVID-19 by EPIC-Africa revealed that 55.69 per cent of CSOs had experienced reduced funding, and another 69 per cent had wound down their operations.^{xii}

Resource challenges are linked to power imbalances, and not all organizations have the base level of human and financial resources required to advance the agenda. As one stakeholder stated, “To build movements, you need an organization and for an organization, you need resources”. At the same time, it was noted that there are instances where organizational behaviors might contribute to the competition. As one informant indicated, “They will say, ‘we cannot come to the party because we are not well-funded’”.

Another external challenge identified was the tendency for **agendas and priorities to be set by donors and actors external to the environment** in which joint initiatives are to be implemented. One key informant highlighted that “people sitting in national capitals, they are not connected with realities on the ground”.

Another respondent recommended that actors involved in the communities of focus should be involved in the planning of any decisions, which could build the connectivity and jointness of an approach. For example, a stakeholder noted a challenge in support to women's movements because “movement-building was set up as a project” and did not reflect the fact that “women's movement-building is fluid and may not work within a set monitoring and evaluation framework”.

It was also mentioned that institutional systems can present barriers. For example, when government endorsement was a condition for the support, the control of a project and restrictions placed on partners with whom CSOs could work was flagged as a concern. One key stakeholder commented that often “donors do not want their funds to be mixed for visibility reasons and for tracking spending”. Stakeholders also highlighted how donor priorities fixed for an unrealistic four- or five-year period will determine how issues are resourced (or not). **Short timelines that do not allow for sustainability of investments was repeatedly raised as a difficulty.** One stakeholder commented on the need for patience, noting, “the creation of effective joint initiatives takes a long time (for example, up to two years in the design phase), but leads to better results”. She emphasized that at the start of any initiative, it is important to have dialogue with donors on the change pathways and timelines required. This also calls for greater engagement with development partners to encourage them to embrace joint initiatives.

The reason for the need for a more flexible than ‘usual’ timeframe in this context is the complexity of EAWG and the difficulties in **changing the inequitable social norms** which perpetuate the problem. As one respondent pointed out, “the time needed to alter social norms around such harmful practices should be taken into account in the design of joint programmes”. As highlighted in a VAWG Programme Evaluation in Ethiopia, “challenging norms supportive of violence and gender

inequality requires a high level of competency, skill and individual commitment, and there was not a robust mechanism to ensure individuals designated to communicate/deliver training (often government trainers, or police with some training) were able to demonstrate knowledge of EAWG principles, or articulate internalized commitment to gender equality and rights-based approaches.”^{xiii}

In joint initiatives, where the reach of programming is wider and multiple partners are seeking to deliver on the same results, the lack of understanding on EAWG and on principles of transformative change can pose a risk to women and girls beyond the failure to meet objectives.

Finally, the external political and socio-economic context was raised as a barrier which particularly challenges joint initiatives, given the importance of government and institutional buy-in at all governance levels. Several examples were provided related to **reducing civic space** for NGOs to operate within, **discriminatory legal and policy measures** that limited how joint initiatives could engage with specific marginalized groups, and **weak ownership or commitment** to results.

“Because of the level of effort required to do things jointly, particularly in the UN system, it is not always thought that joint initiatives are the best way to do things.”
key Informant





ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

Involving traditional leaders in Malawi

One joint UN initiative on ending child marriage was described as having worked well with a Chief Forum at the district and sub-area levels, utilizing workplans to address GBV and HPs in the community. However, at the village level where traditional practices tended to be more embedded, less progress had been achieved. This was associated with the fact that certain areas did not have Chief Forums, but also highlights the difficulty in influencing changes in practices where social norms have not yet have changed.

2. Organizational values and structures

The failure to include effective components of joint initiatives can also relate to how organizations are oriented in the work, where there is exclusion of relevant partners, where those involved are insufficiently engaged and do not 'own' the project (including the need for joint work), or where there is a disconnect between values and perspectives of partner organizations on key issues. The way organizations are structured, the values they hold and promote, and the approaches that they affects what can be achieved in terms of EVAWG. An organization with a 'silo' mentality which fails to embrace others cannot effectively engage in a joint initiative. A common challenge identified was the lack of a clear vision and agenda. Related to this was the design of initiatives that were over-ambitious or too broad because they were focused on balancing partner requests, rather than on the issue that needed to be addressed.

"It tried to get everyone on board and then they sort of got lost along the way", reported one key stakeholder. Clarity is also critical for managing relationships and roles. As another respondent put it, joint initiatives "need to have a clear focus on the partners to work with, and to have clear output for all. All CSOs came

with what they wanted, and it wasn't easy to manage all the competition and to know who is doing what."

Setting a common agenda requires another element that was raised as a source of tension within joint initiatives: differing values between partners. "We are not as cohesive as we should be. We need to put aside personal value systems," shared one respondent. An example was provided where a partner pulled out of a joint initiative due to gaps in the system related to the values of respect and mutuality. Another reflection was made that "there is a new wave of activists who use the right language, but do not have conviction. There is no longer activism which does not involve money." The motivation to engage, beliefs and values that organizations bring into joint initiatives will vary, and the diversity of perspective is a strength for joint initiatives. At the same time, initiatives need to invest in processes to effectively navigate ways to collaborate where there might be fractures across values, or generational or ideological divides.

Another challenge raised by stakeholders consulted was the lack of accountability to women and girls and to feminist principles within joint initiatives.

As one stakeholder shared, “When an initiative is driven by a particular agenda, it failed to be fully accountable to women and girls... initiatives cannot be set up for the sake of building them. When funding structures and governance are rigid, something gets lost within the mechanism. It’s as if the patriarchal mechanism is coming to meet and address feminist ideology”. Similarly, a respondent noted how external processes can encourage compliance over actual collaboration “where calls for joint proposals are not rigorous and it becomes a ‘tick box’ exercise, rather than recognition of the need for sustainable partnerships. Agreeing to partnerships may be for convenience, which results in unsustainability”. The challenge of alignment to feminist principles is both in the way joint initiatives themselves operate as well as in how organizations within the joint initiatives operate internally (for example, managing their operations democratically, based on values of equitable and transformational leadership, and being courageous in challenging partners where they are not being accountable to their commitments). The ‘jointness’ of the initiative makes these differences more consequential for achievement of objectives.

3. Processes for engagement in joint initiatives

Challenges raised in relation to how organizations engage in joint initiatives include the lack of acknowledgement of **power dynamics and imbalances** that exist between different organizations working in partnership. Where initiatives did not name and respond to these dynamics, partners were said to have felt undervalued and marginalized due to their (small) size, the type of organization they were, or their low level of resources. Furthermore, there was thought to be ‘gatekeeping’ by some organizations to the exclusion of other partners. This limits the willingness of

organizations to engage and their effectiveness if they do. “No one wants to be brought in because you are remembered later”, pointed out one respondent. Differing power dynamics are one aspect that can contribute to poor trust between organizations, which limits the likely results achieved.

Managing conflict was another process-related challenge identified. An illustrative example was given, as follows: “The movement is big with caucuses and different players. It’s organic, but programming and structuring introduces power. There is so much conflict. Young people in NGOs feel they are outdated and should be online and criticize organizations for ‘Godmother syndrome’: a few people in charge of movements for too long, and inadequately inter-generational, resulting in hostility. And older people think younger people don’t understand.” Such negative interactions fuel despondency and can reduce passion for the cause. One individual lamented, “I don’t even know if the issue of GBV can wait for us to get it together, given the urgency!”

The need to manage conflicts can help mitigate related challenges around **lack of clarity on organizational expectations and roles**, coupled with **weak coordination structures**, which came up in the consultations and literature reviewed. These carry the risk of duplication, wasted resources and in the worst case, doing harm to women and girls and their communities. In particular, several programme reports and evaluations noted that despite the existence of such structures, “the various mechanisms for coordinating work on VAWG and the investments in them were not leading to the desired results, including resource mobilization, and were often not coherent or inclusive of all partners.”^{xiv} In a 2022 corporate evaluation by UN Women, it was noted that “[t]he variety of challenges identified reflect the tendency to split GBV efforts into different parcels and only at moments bring people together for dialogue. Multiple players in the policy advocacy ecosystem may work disjointedly.”^{xv}

“With reference to the disability movement, there is a lot of trust-building to be done so that we can work together smoothly. It comes from the perspective where the disability movement has been exploited and they are certainly cautious of any hand that is extended to them in the form of partnership(s). The same thing can be said with regards to the LGBTQI movement.” *Key Informant*

Across challenges, the message remains that the most effective components of joint initiatives on EVAWG need to be woven in during development and throughout implementation. Rather than focusing on problematic partner engagement, intentional effort is required to ensure that the benefits of joint work are seen and felt by the women and girls they are meant to serve.



4. A pivotal role for UN Women in Inter-Agency joint initiatives?

UN Women has a specific mandate to address EVAWG, and since its creation through the merger of four UN entities in 2010, the entity has deepened its experience in doing so. Of note is the value placed on joint initiatives by UN Women, illustrated by its criteria for country offices to have a percent of its programming delivered through joint UN initiatives. There are a variety of reasons for this: for example, the intersectional nature of gender equality, the intransigence of harmful traditional and cultural patriarchal and misogynistic beliefs at the root of VAWG, and the need for new and innovative approaches to the problem.

A key informant from Uganda observed that UN Women's core feminist understanding and ideology meant that it championed the lived experiences of women and girls this mitigated programmatic difficulties during the Spotlight Initiative, with its six Pillar structure was constructed as multi-agency programme. These included challenges in design, inadequate resources, funding delays, and partner conflicts. She added, "UN Women helped women's movement leaders understand themselves beyond the project", increasing the likelihood of sustaining results. Another key informant described UN Women as having been invaluable in supporting women's movement leaders to grow and strengthen beyond project confines.

Given the agency's considerable experience in joint programmes within the UN system, UN Women has the potential to act as a key connector between wider women's movements and the UN system to accelerate achievements. The relative youth of UN Women vis-a-vis the other UN agencies was seen as both a strength and a weakness: dynamic and innovative, yet under-funded, given its mandate and the slow pace of progress on EVAWG and gender equality more broadly. There was an underlying feeling described by multiple participants that the agency was also at times under-appreciated and negative interagency power dynamics were described by a number of participants. This reinforces the need for reflection and perspective-taking to understand comparative advantages, alongside a continuous focus upon the shared vision for desired change. Indeed, one respondent recommended that there should be a specific role for UN Women as a champion within all joint programmes which focus or even touch upon VAWG. How could such a role for UN Women be facilitated? Any such role would need to be bolstered by additional earmarked funding to enable the agency to carry out such an important coordinating function. The UN system needs to reflect further upon this, and it is hoped that this report provides an evidence-base from which innovation in this regard may spring - and more inroads are made for EVAWG.



PROMISING
PRACTICES

Despite the many challenges identified, the literature review and consultations with stakeholders highlighted a variety of promising practices that can be integrated in the various phases of planning, implementing and monitoring of joint initiatives for EVAWG to improve their effectiveness.



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence
against women and girls

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

Platform to share good practices

In June 2021, the Spotlight Initiative Africa Regional Programme launched a virtual continental learning platform for exchange across the eight countries in Africa implementing the Spotlight Initiative. The platform aimed to share innovative, promising or good practices for informed implementation with programme teams and to support partnership-building across the continent. At the first meeting of programmes, the focus was on ensuring coherence and comparability in data collection, analysis and dissemination within different contexts, as well as how to foster a stronger sense of shared contribution to the elimination of VAWG within Spotlight Initiative programmes. Participants worked together to identify common and emerging trends, brainstorm on mitigating measures for operational challenges and assess how to inform more effective future programming.

1. Planning and design: Setting up joint initiatives for success

It is important to remember that joint initiatives on EVAWG are situated within patriarchal, social and political power structures and realities. These social structures and norms have contributed to the inadequate resourcing of joint initiatives on EVAWG and replication of unequal power relations within the institutions responsible for upholding gender equality, including within programmes and within the broader development sector. To effectively engage within these systemic constraints, joint initiative design processes should be grounded in a strong analysis of the local context, including decision-making power, norms and any fractures - generational, ideological, or political - that might affect collaboration. Designers of joint initiatives must also take deliberate steps to build trust and strengthen equitable power relations between a diversity of partners across all phases.

The decision to develop a joint initiative works best when it is based on strategic assessment

over financial incentive alone. This is most impactful when it prioritizes evidence-based, holistic, and multi-sectoral approaches with investments that work across the prevention-response continuum, as illustrated in models such as the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative.^{xvi} Through the requirement of each country to have high-level government leadership and support and civil society engagement at the outset for the Initiative's approval at country level, most country programmes were able to achieve results against the expected plans. This buy-in is critical for generating enthusiasm and embedding the foundations of success.

"The cause should bring people together, not just the budget." Key Informant



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

South Africa

South Africa's National Strategic Plan for GBV and Femicide was initiated in response to calls to urgent action by women's groups and civil society more generally. It was catalyzed via a Presidential Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in 2018. Developed jointly with a wide range of stakeholders, flexibility was built in, with opportunities to adjust along the way. This contributed to the shared ownership of the Plan. As one informant shared, "It is referred to as 'our Plan' - a signal that all owned this Plan and we identify quick wins, low hanging fruit and implement jointly; there are no 'us and them'. We learn from each other and commend civil society contributions and also work with development partners because the government alone cannot tackle the problem". The Presidential leadership of the Strategic Plan has enabled its layered accountability and reporting mechanisms, with reports going both to government institutions and the President on a monthly basis. Furthermore, Pillar leadership is spread across government departments.

The high-level commitment must also be matched with a collaborative design, which is intentionally inclusive of diverse voices, measured by the breadth of those meaningfully engaged in the process. This must ensure attention to survivor-centred approaches and intersectionality so that those most affected are speaking for themselves and guiding and informing decisions when initiatives are designed, implemented and monitored.

Recognizing the importance of sustaining political will for EVAWG over time, initiatives need to be designed to work through leadership transitions and plan for building programmatic resilience against shrinking civic space or discrimination against specific groups within the population as well as in the context of climate crises, conflict and fragility, when VAWG levels are likely to increase and there is limited time for building new relationships. This should consider ways to leverage existing expertise and historical gains to drive future change, for example, drawing upon the significance of women's movements across Africa. They can also designing measures to allow for the adaptation in the scope of an initiative during periods of change or crises, as illustrated in the shifts that organizations made during the COVID-19 pandemic. It should also invest in building alliances through collaboration and system strengthening, including

through individual and institutional capacity development.

Given the complexities involved in addressing VAWG and the expanding range of actors engaged in new efforts, joint initiatives should have dedicated inception phases to establish how partners will organize their work and procedures before beginning implementation. This is also important to develop deep understanding and build on competencies around VAWG, gender equality and rights-based approaches among individuals working on joint initiatives.

It also requires conducting an honest analysis of the comparative advantage of partners engaged in an initiative, and realistic timelines required for realizing desired changes. A promising practice identified by one informant was the institutional mentorship and continuous support model during implementation provided by Raising Voices for the GBV Prevention Network members, contributing to deepening capacities around EVAWG practices.

Working through existing coordination mechanisms where possible and investing financial and technical resources in strengthening coordination is a critical foundation for effective joint initiatives. The work on coordination must not only bring partners together, but also deliberately map and deepen synergies and

buy-in across actors and strengthen connections between the different mechanisms that operate at national and local levels. This could also involve the development (as relevant) of standard operating procedures (SOPs) protocols, codes of conduct, formal provider networks, case management guidelines, and other tools.

2. Implementation and monitoring: keeping intentionality and the end goal in mind

Throughout implementation, it is important to have dedicated personnel for coordination of joint initiatives to retain a focus on collective results and facilitate pooling resources across partners towards this end. This is crucial for maintaining strong and collaborative relationships, managing expectations among partners, and focusing attention on the theory of change and end goals. It will also help to support the multi-partner coordination mechanisms led by government and encourage strategic tracking of progress. The latter can be facilitated by having a clear monitoring and evaluation framework that connects different activities and highlights complementarity at different levels. This is the model used in the Malawi

Gender Sector Working Groups which work through referral pathway partners, including psychosocial support officers and the police. It is vital that all partners recognize that everyone has something useful to bring to the table. To keep this level of focus, stakeholders highlighted the importance of holding regular joint meetings for planning and monitoring, where sharing of contributions could grow a sense of complementarity and strengthen the initiative's common vision. This facilitates a more streamlined approach to implementation and coherence in the reporting of results.

In addition to the need for convening to monitor progress, there is significant value in nurturing safe spaces and platforms for partners - particularly civil society - at global, regional and national levels for exchange of experiences and learning from each other, while growing and deepening their connections as a collective. For example, a key informant shared how a joint EVAWG initiative in Rwanda brought together service providers, local leaders and investigators within referral pathways, and facilitated discussions between physicians and police investigators to improve their understanding of the medical terminology in the context of the justice chain. In addition to more technical awareness- and skills-development, the importance of Communities of Practice,^{xvii} inter-generational dialogues, and organizational mentoring were other areas identified as valuable.



UN Women/Michael Goima



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

National Steering Committee in Malawi

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative National Steering Committee co-chaired by the Minister of Gender and UN Resident Coordinator was reported to have worked very well. This governance structure resulted in improved government ownership, kept all informed of programmatic developments, and ensured that the joint initiative was aligned with national priorities. It also built shared accountability through clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. At the local level, the District Council led the Gender Technical Working Group, bringing various governmental and civil society stakeholders together. The act of convening helps to build and strengthen relationships and allows all partners to discuss what is happening in the district and any issues of concern. At both national and local levels, government ownership and leadership was identified as a critical factor. Also vital for its success was the fact that the joint initiative has been supported by the financial and technical resources to support and enable the coordination.

The literature and stakeholder consultations highlighted numerous successful existing platforms for collaboration such as the global Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum, the regional GBV Prevention Network hosted by Raising Voices in Uganda or Women's Forum of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and national platforms such as community-level spaces, or the *Mkuki* Coalition (facilitated by WILDAF in Tanzania).

Considering the power imbalances and differential resourcing across groups engaged in joint initiatives, it is essential to target the most marginalized groups when allocating resources during implementation. This strategy was employed by the Spotlight Initiative in each implementation country. Expanding the number and variety of platforms where calls for proposals were shared was another way to reach smaller and perhaps emerging or more localized organizations. Similarly, having representatives from groups identified as facing intersecting forms of discrimination

within the initiative's governance and oversight structures, including during monitoring is important. This also builds relationships over time, improving checks and balances, simultaneously shifting the donor-recipient relationship onto a more equal footing.

Building flexibility in approaches to enable adjustments as the context changes or when theoretical interventions fail to work in reality was identified as an important practice for all successful joint initiatives. The value of working in collaboration and solidarity is particularly pertinent in this respect and can bring meaningful change during times of fragility. For example, a VAWG prevention initiative in Rwanda did not consider or include women with disabilities. However, following a programmatic assessment which revealed that the participation and involvement of women with disabilities and disability inclusion had been left behind, an organization of persons with disabilities (OPD) was brought into an advisory position within the programme.

Similarly, engaging actors such as young women can catalyze new action, facilitate innovation, and support the modification of harmful community practices. For example, in Zimbabwe, one stakeholder noted, “Prior to Spotlight, people worked on EVAWG, but youth were not involved. Inter-generational interventions in the fight against VAWG brought energy and creativity. For example, UN Women’s initiative Innovators Against GBV involving youth in research and subsequent advocacy for EVAWG was a very effective strategy.”



ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE

Innovation in crises

Following the revolution in Sudan, the African Women Leaders’ Network (AWLN) and the African Union (AU) used solidarity visits when the peace agreement was signed to support and draw attention to women’s rights and the need for women’s participation in leadership and decision-making.

Joint Initiatives should plan for sustainability. This will require consideration of the measures that will need to continue beyond implementation, with explicit attention given to supporting CSOs through both capacity-development and maintaining the resources they need to operate. This can be facilitated through the coordination mechanisms and the institutional leadership of the joint initiative. It also involves taking incremental steps towards embedding adequate resourcing within a relevant institution. Finally, engaging with the donor community to bring others on board to support is necessary long before a joint initiative comes to an end. Investment in good documentation on strategic changes reached through joint initiatives is relevant in this regard, as it can facilitate greater support. Such documentation is also essential to communicate progress, both for external actors not engaged in the initiative and for partners within joint initiatives to see and celebrate success along the way and to make changes as required in order to improve future interventions. Celebration of success

and awareness-raising about VAWG and the initiative can also be supported via media partnerships to reach a critical mass within the community.

The government-convened Gender Technical Working Group in Malawi brings all the various stakeholders including CSOs together to discuss what is happening in the district and any issues. Government ownership and leadership has been an important factor. Technical assistance from UN Women has been provided where possible, and, importantly, ensures that there funding available to conduct the meetings. “Without Spotlight funding which is quite substantial – the convenings, the technical support could not be done.”

The practices identified through the research illustrate the range of actions that can be taken to ensure success of joint initiatives. Through intentionality and a desire to support collaboration and solidarity, efforts to end VAWG can lead to better outcomes for the women and girls most at risk of violence.

The image features a vertical split background. The top half is a solid blue color, and the bottom half is a solid red color. In the blue section, there are two overlapping circles: a smaller, solid blue circle in the center, and a larger, semi-transparent light blue circle that overlaps it. In the red section, there are also two overlapping circles: a smaller, solid red circle in the center, and a larger, semi-transparent light red circle that overlaps it. The word "CONCLUSION" is written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font across the middle of the red section, positioned over the larger light red circle. A thin white horizontal line is drawn directly beneath the text.

CONCLUSION

This study has highlighted that joint initiatives for EVAWG remain an important area of investment in East and Southern Africa for improving progress for women and girls to live free from violence. The research has contributed some insight on how collaboration and solidarity are essential for effective EVAWG initiatives and can serve as a reference point for continued exploration on how to apply these concepts toward achieving better results for women and girls at risk of or survivors of violence. The programmatic assessment has reinforced the existing evidence that when partners work well together through efforts that contribute to both good collaboration and strengthened solidarity, the resources allocated to EVAWG are better spent, and there is stronger government ownership of interventions and their results. This helps to sustain efforts beyond a single initiative's lifespan. The evidence highlights how joint initiatives can foster collective power and ensure that communities are supported with the resources and tools to enable them to drive the changes they need and lead the solutions that will improve the lives of diverse women and girls, while building resilience against backlash, and protection for marginalized groups.

Joint initiatives on EVAWG have been associated with various benefits and areas of progress, such as greater awareness on VAWG and the support services available;

- improved health, economic and social services to survivors and coordination between service providers;
- increased reporting of VAWG and support in accessing justice;
- advocacy/mobilization of allies and champions;
- new and/or stronger and more effective community-based networks;
- improved capacities around collection and analysis of data on VAWG and human rights instruments;

- significant commitments on policy developments; and
- enhanced state and community ownership and capacity to advance gender equality.

Across the areas of inquiry, the research revealed the common features of joint initiatives which are needed to realize effective results to end VAWG. While many of these can be applied to broader development and human rights issues, given the significant scale of the problem there is a particular urgency to utilize the lessons in the context of EVAWG. This programmatic analysis offers hope on how joint initiatives can support accelerated progress towards EVAWG, elaborating the various elements and aspects of joint initiatives that can be nurtured and cultivated between individuals, at the organizational level and within a movement or across movements on EVAWG. It takes a relational view on engagement rather than a focus on linear steps that can be actioned and left behind. It also encourages an understanding of the wider power systems and connections that exist and are influencing the results - or lack thereof - on EVAWG.

The study has provided clarity on some of the key challenges that need to be confronted to make joint initiatives more effective and highlights the risks of doing harm if these issues (such as competition between actors) are not addressed. Despite the shared commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the many EVAWG policies and plans developed across the region, there is a need to develop a broader and more intersectional understanding of the intractable issues and move away from the practice of operating in silos that do not accelerate change for women and girls. Towards this end, the findings of this research and recommendations should be reviewed and analyzed with VAWG survivor organizations and groups representing those facing intersecting forms of discrimination (such as women and girls with disabilities, LGBTIQ persons, sex-workers, migrants, etc.) to ensure the relevance of the findings hold true for diverse stakeholders.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the findings of the study, UN Women and all partners are encouraged to consider and explore ways to take forward the following five actions for future joint initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Prioritize accountability to diverse women and girls so that those most affected by violence are guiding all stages of joint initiatives and that partnerships model accountable practices. This must involve explicit considerations in how joint initiatives are conceptualized and designed and requires all actors to take a critical review of their current practices, including attention to mutual accountability. By re-centering the frame of reference for initiatives around the individuals and groups most marginalized by violence and discrimination, the results of any investment will have greater and more lasting impact.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Promote connections as well as safe spaces to build trust, shared experiences, and joint learning, where honest and humble exchange of perspectives and practices between partners can enable the creation of a joint vision for EVAWG across actors and shared understanding of approaches to be used. This must be done in a continuous way from the design and throughout implementation of joint initiatives and focus on nurturing relationships in a dynamic context rather than completing steps in a linear process.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Cultivate an appreciation for the wider ecosystem in which all actors operate, recognizing the value of diverse contributions and collective results, with honest reflection of power imbalances, analysis of strengths, and a spirit of mutual learning which values practice-based knowledge.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Invest in deliberate approaches and structures which build solidarity and collaboration within initiatives and across movements for EVAWG at the individual, organizational, and policy levels. Collaboration and solidarity are recognized as essential components of joint initiatives, but there needs to be greater understanding of what actions can advance solidarity (for example, attention collective care) and what strengthens collaboration, why they both matter, and to what degree they make a difference for effective EVAWG initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Fund longer-term strategic cooperation aligned to feminist principles, which explicitly dismantles resource competition and power imbalances between actors, including through more flexible funding modalities. Intentional investment in collaboration and solidarity requires actors to dedicate financial and human resources over time with attention to what works and can support partnerships which can overcome challenges and lead to long-term impact for EVAWG.

It is hoped that beyond those partners working on EVAWG, this report will be applicable to joint work across the humanitarian, development peace nexus and the components identified can be adapted to different contexts and programmes globally.



ANNEXES

Annex 1: Research Terms of Reference

Consultant to Conduct Analysis and Consolidate Programming Lessons for Strengthening Movements and Solidarity for Ending Violence against Women and Girls in East and Southern Africa.

Background

UN Women is grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, the empowerment of women, and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. Placing women's rights at the centre of all its efforts, UN Women leads and coordinates United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action in East and Southern Africa (ESA).

Ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) remains a priority area for UN Women in East and Southern Africa, as the most widespread violation of human rights. Regional prevalence estimates of women and girls' experiences of different forms of violence are often higher than global averages.^[1] For example, the WHO 2018 prevalence estimates show that 20% of ever-married/partnered women aged 15–49 in Sub-Saharan Africa have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) in the past 12 months, the highest compared to other regions, while 33% have experienced violence in their lifetime, which is higher than the global estimates of 27%.^[2]

Given the scale of the problem and the diversity of women and girls' experiences with violence, there is growing evidence that effective, accountable, and sustainable approaches

to prevent and respond to the various forms of violence requires collaboration and solidarity across organizations and institutions working through different entry points. For example, the European Union and United Nations [Spotlight Initiative](#) launched in September 2017 was designed with a dedicated pillar to strengthening civil society organizations and women's movements. Similarly, the RESPECT Framework (2019) and Implementation Guide (2020) for preventing violence against women developed by WHO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Women, in collaboration with ten other UN, bilateral, and multilateral agencies, highlights the importance of supporting women's rights organizations and movements as a key aspect of an enabling environment, building on evidence generated by numerous organizations over the past decade.^[3]

Beyond the critical support to women's movements and civil society strengthening, there is also increasing attention on the importance of nurturing multi-stakeholder partnerships for EVAWG, as articulated in the UN Development System Reforms and the broader Sustainable Development Goal 17 on Partnerships. Within the UN Development System Reforms, a 2020 recommendation encouraged 'UN entities to assist governments in taking action to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, and to support governments to adopt specific measures to protect the poor, women, youth and children from all forms of violence and discrimination', including through coordination and coherence of the UN system.

[4] UN Women’s 2021 Corporate Evaluation of UN Women’s UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women further found that 51% of Gender Theme Groups responding to the evaluation survey reported the existence of joint UN workplans on EVAWG.[5] At country, regional and global levels, a variety of joint UN EVAWG efforts are underway, including but not limited to the Spotlight Initiative, the Essential Services Programme, the roll-out of the RESPECT Framework, among others.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships for driving collective change are also at the center of the six [Action Coalitions](#) launched at the 2021 Generation Equality Forum, including a dedicated [Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence](#) (GBV). To ensure the Coalition and similar joint efforts for EVAWG can be most effective, there is a need to take stock and reflect on the lessons emerging from joint EVAWG programmes. Noting that 42% of the 453 the GBV Action Coalition commitment-makers are from the continent of Africa and given the leadership of the Government of Kenya and the YES! Trust Zimbabwe in the GBV Action Coalition and UN Women’s presence in the region, there is an opportunity to generate evidence from East and Southern Africa on how an explicit approach to multi-stakeholder collaboration and solidarity, including attention to strengthening movements and intersectionality, can contribute to improved accountability for women and girls.

As part of UN Women East and Southern Africa’s Strategic Note 2022-2025, the entity seeks to support regional women’s movements, networks, and organizations to use their voice, leadership and agency to hold duty-bearers accountable for their commitments to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls and to also support UN Country Teams in the East and Southern Africa Region to have capacity to implement UN Corporate Gender Commitments (including related to EVAWG). In support of these results, UN Women, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Women Count Programme, seeks

to hire a consultant to consolidate experiences and analyze approaches to supporting effective multi-stakeholder collaboration, solidarity and strengthened movements as part of joint EVAWG efforts in ESA and identify promising practices to inform future investments.

Objective

The study aims to contribute evidence on the elements required by joint EVAWG initiatives to improve multi-stakeholder collaboration and solidarity for accelerated achievement of national and regional commitments, in line with the existing EVAWG commitments in East and Southern Africa, including as part of the GBV Action Coalition. This will fill a gap in knowledge on how partnerships can be leveraged to have a greater impact in both preventing and responding to violence against women and girls, by generating evidence of what works and how programmes can connect movements and strengthen solidarity between actors, building on existing lessons, such as from the Spotlight Initiative in Africa. It will raise visibility of existing efforts supporting strengthened movements, multi-stakeholder collaboration and solidarity for EVAWG, improve intervention design, accountability and inform future investments on the issue by governments, development partners and regional bodies, including in support of the GBV Action Coalition.

Scope of Work

The consultant, under overall guidance of the UN Women Regional Policy Specialist on EVAWG, will lead the research and analysis on how intentional approaches to multi-stakeholder partnership, movements strengthening and solidarity in EVAWG initiatives in East and Southern Africa can facilitate more effective progress on the issue. The analysis will be based on qualitative and quantitative data from document reviews and consultations with individuals and organizations engaged in joint EVAWG programmes[6] in East and Southern Africa, specifically in the 13 countries where UN Women has presence.[7]

The consultant will be responsible for consolidating and reviewing available project documentation, developing and conducting surveys, virtual focus group discussions, key informant interviews, analysing results and presenting in a synthesized format. This will include presenting the approach to a Reference Group established for the research, incorporating feedback UN Women and submitting a final report with recommendations on the analysis in line with UN Women publication guidelines. The findings will serve as a reference for Governments, regional actors, UN and other development partners and philanthropy actors in how their investments should frame and fund issues of strengthening solidarity and movements on EVAWG to have more effective and sustainable results. The consultant will be responsible for providing regular updates on the process and submission of the deliverables in a timely manner.

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- [1] See: [What we do: Ending violence against women | UN Women – Africa](#)
 - [2] WHO (World Health Organization). 2021. Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018: Global, Regional and National Prevalence Estimates for Intimate Partner Violence against Women and Global and Regional Prevalence Estimates for Non-partner Sexual Violence against Women. Geneva: WHO, on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence Against Women Estimation and Data (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNODC, United Nations Statistics Division and UN Women).
 - [3] See UN Women and Social Development Direct (2020) RESPECT Framework Strengthening the Enabling Environment for VAW Prevention; Dunkle, K, et. al. 2018. [Disability and Violence against Women and Girls Emerging Evidence from the What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls Global Programme.](#)
 - [4] United Nations, 2020. [Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the UN system.](#) A/RES/75/233. New York. United Nations.
 - [5] UN Women, 2021. [Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination And Broader Convening Role In Ending Violence Against Women.](#) New York. UN Women.
 - [6] This will include, but not be limited to the European Union - UN Spotlight Initiative and other joint UN Programmes.
 - [7] UN Women has presence in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Annex 2 - Focus Group Discussion Questions

AIM 1.

To assess the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives and identify examples of what makes them effective

1. a. Poll 1:

In your experience, have you found any joint EVAWG initiatives that have accelerated progress on ending VAWG? (Yes, No, Not Sure)

b. Poll 2:

Have cross-movement initiatives contributed to ending VAWG? (e.g initiatives involving both women's rights organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities, or youth organizations and organizations providing VAWG services) (Yes, No, Not Sure)

2. Plenary – invite 4-5 - please think of some examples of joint initiatives or cross-movement initiatives on EAWG. [*to be done on Google Jamboard*]

a. What components of joint EAWG initiatives lead to better results? (Prompt: Please name the joint initiative. Components could be related to how the initiative is designed and result areas, governance, etc.) [NB this is the 'promising practices' question for FGDs]

b. Please give examples of any aspects of joint EAWG initiatives which have NOT been effective. [Prompt: e.g., not having the right partners, or lack of clarity on roles/governance]

3. In what ways can joint EAWG initiatives accelerate achievement of national and regional commitments relating to EAWG? For example, how might joint initiatives ensure progress on the commitments made in the Action Coalition on GBV, or under the Maputo Protocol, etc. (Prompt improving accountability, ownership, coordination)

AIM 2.

To identify ways to strengthen solidarity within joint EAWG initiatives, including connections across movements

4. From your experience, what elements or characteristics within joint EAWG initiatives strengthen multi-stakeholder solidarity? (Prompt: processes of programme design, governance, etc.)

5. Are there ways for joint EAWG initiatives to strengthen *cross-movement* solidarity towards ending VAWG? [eg. cross-movement organizations which may or may not be formal implementing partners of a joint EAWG initiative, such as climate justice organizations working with WROs, or WEE organizations partnering with NGOs focusing on EAWG]

- a. Ask for concrete examples
 - b. If there are none, ask for suggestions/their vision for the future
6. What kinds of challenges within joint EVAWG initiatives limit or weaken multi-stakeholder solidarity? [Prompt: programme design, governance, etc.]

AIM 3.

To identify how to ensure good collaboration on EVAWG

For the purpose of this research, collaboration is defined as “*individuals or groups (including institutions, organizations, or networks) working in a cooperative way on a particular task or towards a particular result - which may be a time-bound or an ongoing relationship*”

7. In what ways can joint EVAWG initiatives improve either collaboration on EVAWG between organizations generally, OR *cross-movement* collaboration? [Prompt and inquire if not mentioned: by leveling power dynamics between larger and smaller organizations]

AIM 4.

To identify how to improve the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives

8. Poll 3: Considering the conversation today, how important do you think strong multi-stakeholder collaboration is for the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives?
- Essential,
 - Important but not necessary
 - Something that does not determine the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives
 - Not Sure
9. Poll 4: Considering the conversation today, how important do you think strong multi-stakeholder solidarity is for the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives?
- Essential
 - Important, but not necessary
 - Something that does not have a direct impact on the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives
 - Not Sure
10. Are there any other reflections you wish to share?

Annex 3 - Key Informant Interview Questions

KII Data Collection Tool

QUESTION

These questions are about what makes joint initiatives on EVAWG effective.

AIM 1.

To assess the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives and identify examples of what makes them effective

1.
 - a. [For UN Women:] Can you tell us about the joint EVAWG initiatives UN Women is involved in within XXX country? For example, who is involved, your role, and how you have engaged in these initiatives? (e.g. did you contribute to their design or have a role given your position as XXX? [adjust for different respondents])
 - b. Please tell us if there are other joint EVAWG initiatives that UNW is not part of.
 - c. [For Govt/CSOs:] Can you tell us about any joint EVAWG initiatives that you are aware of in your country or region? For example, their focus, how long they have been implemented and who is involved? (e.g., did you contribute to their design or have a role, given your position as XXX [adjust for different respondents - as a donor, implementer, etc])
2. To what extent, if any/have any of these joint initiative(s) made progress in accelerating the elimination of VAWG? What was the change in progress and what enabled that change? For example, what parts of the joint EVAWG initiative were essential to make the intervention a success?
3. Can you tell us about any *cross-movement* initiatives in your country or in the region working on EVAWG? (e.g., initiatives involving both WROs and OPDs, or youth organizations and organizations providing VAWG services) If so, which ones?
4.
 - a. (If cross-movement initiatives are named) What has been your direct experience with these cross-movement initiatives? (e.g., as an implementing partner, donor, etc)?
 - b. Do you think any of these cross-movement EVAWG initiatives accelerated progress on the issue? If yes, describe the changes you have seen or the contributions you think they have made, and if no, can you explain what you think went wrong?
 - c. (If no cross-movement initiatives are named) What do you think might be some of the reasons why there are no cross-movement EVAWG initiatives in your context?

5.
 - a. Considering both joint and cross-movement EVAWG initiatives, which components of the initiative(s) come to mind which led to better results on EVAWG? (Prompt: Components could be related to how the initiative is designed and result areas, governance, etc.)
 - b. Are there any joint or cross-movement initiatives in your country or region which you think has been *ineffective* in its aim of EVAWG?
 - c. If so, what aspects of this initiative do you think reduced its effectiveness?
6. [*If not already mentioned*] In what ways can joint or cross-movement EVAWG initiatives accelerate achievement of national and regional [or international] commitments relating to EVAWG, such as under the GBV Action Coalition or under the Maputo Protocol? (Prompt - e.g., improving accountability, ownership, coordination)

The next questions are about strengthening solidarity

AIM 2.

To identify ways to strengthen solidarity within joint EVAWG initiatives, including connections across movements

7. From your experience, what elements or characteristics within joint EVAWG initiatives strengthen multi-stakeholder *solidarity*? Please try to name 3. (Prompt: programme design, governance, etc.)
8. What kinds of challenges within joint EVAWG initiatives limit or weaken multi-stakeholder solidarity? (Prompt: programme design, governance, etc.) Please name 3.
9.
 - a. Do you know of any joint EVAWG initiatives in your country or region which include an explicit aim to strengthen *cross-movement* solidarity towards ending VAWG? (Prompt – e.g., cross-movement organizations which may be, or also may not be formal implementing partners of a joint EVAWG initiative, such as climate justice organizations working with WROs or WEE organizations partnering with NGOs focusing on EVAWG)
 - b. If so, please tell us:
 - i. how the initiative evolved; and
 - ii. what it achieved in terms of cross-movement solidarity.
 - iii. Do you have any suggestions on how joint EVAWG initiatives might strengthen solidarity *across movements*?

The following questions are about how to ensure good collaboration on EVAWG

AIM 3.

To identify how to ensure good collaboration on EVAWG

10. Please think about a time when you were involved in a joint EVAWG initiative that worked well in improving collaboration between organizations on EVAWG and how the collaboration began, who was involved, and the relationships between the partners.

- a. Is collaboration with organizations working on EVAWG an explicit aim of the initiative? (*If not already mentioned*)
- b. What led to the improved collaboration? (Prompt - e.g., by leveling power dynamics between larger and smaller organizations)

The final questions are about how to make joint EVAWG initiatives more effective

AIM 4.

To identify how to improve the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives

11. Can you describe some promising practices that you think improve the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives?
12. Please answer the following question and give reasons for your answer. In terms of the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives, would you characterize multi-stakeholder *collaboration* as
 - a) essential;
 - b) important, but not necessary;
 - c) something that does not have a direct impact on the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives; or
 - d) not sure)?
13. Please answer the following question and give reasons for your answer. In terms of the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives, do you think multi-stakeholder *solidarity* is
 - a) essential;
 - b) important, but not necessary; or
 - c) something that does not have a direct impact on the effectiveness of joint EVAWG initiatives;
 - d) not sure?
14. Are there any other reflections you wish to share?

Annex 4: List of Stakeholders Consulted



BURUNDI

Marie Ange Kezimana (Association pour la Promotion de la Jeune Fille Burundaise)

EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Khadidja Hadj Saïd (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - East and Southern Africa – OHCHR ESA), Nyambura Ngugi (UN Women), Mark Nzano (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR), Chiedza Chinakwetu (United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF), Emmanuelle Compingt (UNICEF), Michael Faraday (UN Women), Maxime Houinato (UN Women)



ETHIOPIA

Maria Munir (Association For Women Sanctuary and Development); Meraf Tesfayesus (Ministry of Justice); Seleshi Tadesse (Ministry of Women and Social Affairs); Victoria Maloka (African Union, Women, Gender and Youth Directorate - WGYP)



KENYA

Grace Gitau (Action Aid), Caroline Kabiru (African Population and Health Research Center - APHRC), Caroline Murgor (United Nations Population Fund - UNFPA), Wangu Kanja (Wangu Kanja Foundation), Angelina Cikanda (Centre for Rights Education and Awareness - CREAW), Alfred Makabira (Men Engage), Emily Opati (State Department for Gender), Maria Rosa Cevallos Castells (This Ability), Wangechi Wachira (Centre for Rights Education and Awareness - CREAW), Alberta Wambua (Gender Violence Resource Centre), Miriam Wangu (Wangu Kanja Foundation), Yvonne Wamari (Outright International), Joy Zawadi (Akili Dada), Nelly Warega (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - OHCHR), Josephine Ngebeh (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR))



MALAWI

Maggie Kathewera Banda (Women Legal Rights and Resources Centre - WOLREC), Letty Chiwara (UN Women), Mercy Chikadza (Oxfam), Gertrude Samati Chitika (UN Women), Jean Kayira (High Court of Malawi), Charity Mazengera (Women's Legal Resources Centre), Nelly Mngwaluko (UN Women), Dunia Mphande (Christian Aid Malawi), Chikumbutso Ngosi Ndaferankhande (Action Aid Malawi), Leah Katuya (Emmanuel International), Linessie Phiri (Action Aid), Linga Mihowa (Oxfam), Ronald Phiri (Ministry of Gender), Stonard Madise (Action Aid), Khwimani Mwasinga (United Nations Development Programme - UNDP), Viwemi Chavula (Civil Society Reference Group - CRSG), Walusungu Kayira (Ministry of Local Government), Grace Mulima (Ministry of Education), Almas Araru (United Nations Children's Fund - UNICEF), Dorothy Nyasulu (United Nations Population Fund - UNFPA), Victor Maulidi (UN Women)



MOZAMBIQUE

Fernanda Bernardo (UN Women), Achia Camal (LeMuSiCa - Women's Organisation for Women, Girls and Children- improving living conditions of those affected by violence, discrimination and HIV/AIDS, fights for women's rights and combating GBV), Miguel Jambo (Girl Child Rights Association), Gilberto Macuacua (Former REDE HOPEM (Men for Change)/MenEngage Network Worker), Nyararai Maguduch (Girl Child Rights Association), Ondina da Barca Vieira (UN Women)



RWANDA

Jennet Kem (UN Women), Gaudence Mushimiyimana (Rwandan Organization of Women with Disabilities - UNABU)



SOMALIA

Shukria Dini (Somali Women Study Center)



SOUTH SUDAN

Betty Achan Victor (UN Women), Samuel Atem (Jonglei State Women Association)



SPOTLIGHT AFRICA

Nneoma Albert-Benson (Civil Society Regional Reference Group)



SOUTH AFRICA

Marritt Claassens (Partners in Sexual Health), Tsitsi Fungarani (High Commission of Canada), Bafana Khumalo (Sonke Gender Justice), Nomathamsanqa Masiko-Mpaka (Embassy of Ireland), Angelica Pino (Sexual Violence Research Initiative – SVRI), W.R. (Shoki) Tshabalala (Department of Women Youth and Persons with Disabilities)



SUDAN

Hala Al Karib (Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa Network - SIHA Network), Duha Ali (TAYF- A youth-led initiative dedicated to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Sudan), Sulaima Ishag (Ministry of Social Development VAW Unit and Women's Affairs Directorate), Inaam Salih (PeaceBuilding Fund Secretariat, Resident Coordinator's Office), Ulan Shabynov (PeaceBuilding Fund)



UGANDA

Lillian Adriko (FIDA Uganda), Annelie Areskar (Embassy of Sweden), Ester Mercy Atim (Uganda Association of Women Lawyers - FIDA-Uganda), Madan Bahadur Bam (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR), Anne Gamurorwa (Communication for Development Foundation - CDFU), Sandra Heather (Uganda Women Parliamentary Association), Hawa Kagoya (Center for Domestic Violence Prevention - CEDOVIP), Thomas Kamusiime (European Union), Evelyn Letiyo (UN Women), Adekemi Ndieli (UN Women), Dora Musinguzi (Raising Voices), Luta Shaba (UN Resident Coordinator's Office), Resty Kyomukama Magezi (Alliance of Women Advocating for Change - AWAC), Joshua Okiror (UNDP), Macklean Kyomya (AWAC), Angela Nakafeero (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development - MGLSD), Rachael Ogola (United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA), Christine Nankubunge (UN Women), Ruwaydah Wangara (UNHCR)



TANZANIA

Hodan Addou (UN Women), Julia Broussard (UN Women), Upendo Chitinka (Spotlight Africa Civil Society Regional Reference Group), Hilda Dadu (Coalition of Women Human Rights Defenders – CWHRD), Irene Ishengoma (Global Peace Foundation), Elirehema Kaaya (Association of Tanzania Local Authorities), Carol Ndosi (Women@web), Eunice Mayengela (Kivulini Women’s Rights), Yasin (Kivulini Women’s Rights), Martha Nghambi (Global Peace Foundation), Richard Ng’ondya (Msalala District Council), Deoogratus Temba (Tanzania Gender Networking Programme), Halima Sonda (International Organization for Migration – IOM), Lucy Tesha (UN Women), Getrude Sima (International Labour Organization - ILO), Maja Hansen (United Nations Population Fund - UNFPA)



ZIMBABWE

Verena Bruno (United Nations Population Fund – UNFPA), Audrey Charamba (Civil Society Reference Group -CSRG), Talent Chibvongodze (Innovators Against GBV), Elizabeth Chigwidi (United Nations Children’s Fund -UNICEF), Ida Chimedza (International Labour Organization – ILO), Gift Govere (United Nations Development Programme – UNDP), Mercy Jaravani (Women’s Coalition of Zimbabwe), Kidst Mekonnen (UNICEF), Kudzai Chokumanyara (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization – UNESCO), Pat Made (United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office), Ednah Masiyiwa (Women’s Action Group), Simbarashe Moyo (UN Women), Donald Mudzengerere (Innovators Against GBV), Sarah Murera (UN Women), Nobuhle Mvelase (Innovators Against GBV), Rutendo Edwina Mutongwizo (Innovators Against GBV), Fiona Tinarwo (Women Action Group)

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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 ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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