



# UN WOMEN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

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PUBLICATIONS READER  
SURVEY-2023

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KEY FACTS



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UN Women East and Southern Africa Knowledge Management Strategy (2022-2025) provides for a biennial Publications Reader Survey to understand and appreciate the publications commonly sought by stakeholders of UN Women in the entire region.

This survey also analysed what form of publications are being sought by diverse audiences and how often the publications are consulted by the audiences. It further mapped which parties seek UN Women publications in the region and in what format they preferred whether electronic or hard copies, accessibility for development and, policy-making (particularly in East and Southern Africa) and ways UN Women ESAR could improve on the presentation of their publications to accelerate demand by diverse stakeholders.

Through this publications' reader survey, the region has ensured continuous improvement of the user-friendliness, practicality and overall quality of UN Women's publications.

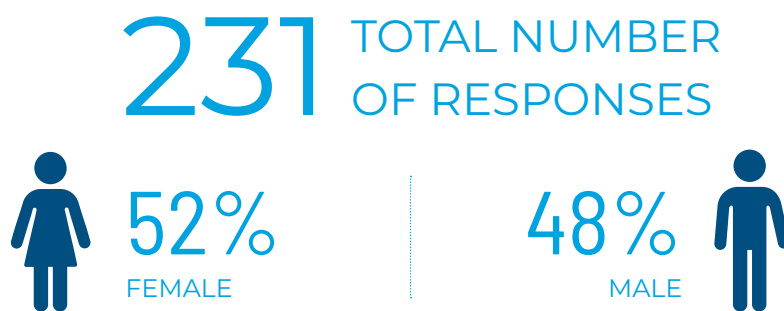
The analysis revealed that UN Women publications are readable and positions gender equality and women's empowerment as a core principle of development.

The total number of responses to the questionnaire was 231 comprising 52% female and 48% male. The results indicate that the readers have rated the publications positively, with over 80% confirming that over the past two years, the quality of UN Women publications have improved.

Over 90% further showed confidence in UN Women publications noting that the publications have been very useful to them.

The survey findings point to increasing interest in gender-related publications by diverse audiences and call for sustained efforts by UN Women ESARO in its efforts of coordinate knowledge production with a clear research and policy agenda that is implementable on an annual basis and a monitoring mechanism in place through a structured knowledge management strategy aligned to the strategic note period (2022-2025).

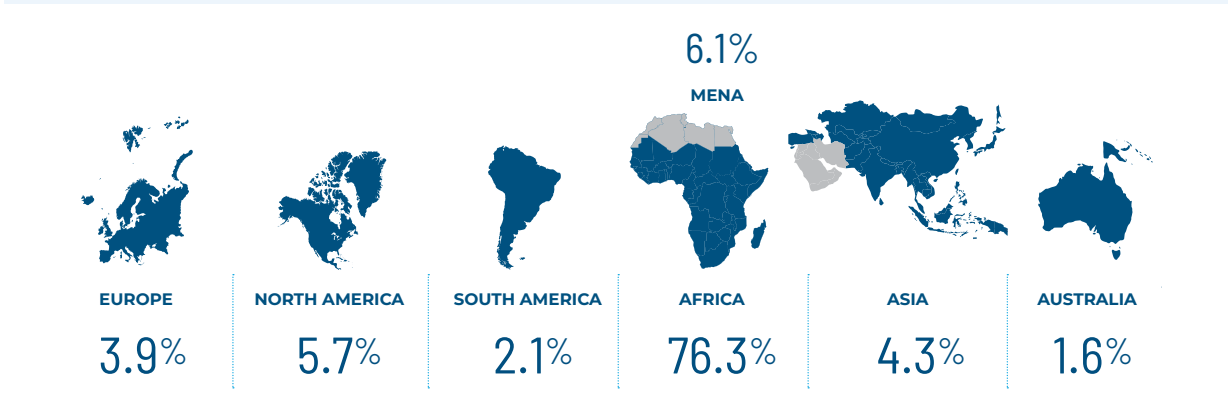
ESARO has a quality assurance guidance note outlining the quality assurance parameters including centralizing the role of quality assurance within the Knowledge Management unit. This has helped build more coherence and a systematic approach to quality and standards of knowledge production in the regional office.



Over 80% confirming that over the past two years, the quality of UN Women publications have improved

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READERSHIP OF UN WOMEN REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS BY CONTINENT



The survey reports that the majority of readership was from Africa.

### OVERALL QUALITY OF PRINTED PUBLICATIONS

From the analysis, the majority of respondents noted that the overall content of the publications is excellent (M=4.39; SD=0.649).

This gives the publications a high approval that the contents align with the audience and thematic vision of UN Women ESARO. No respondents rated the quality of the content in the publications as fair or poor, which returns a positive effort by ESARO in sustaining its efforts towards knowledge production, dissemination and use.

The study established that this has been attributed to the centralized quality assurance process of all publications, including establishing a technical review committee, performing plagiarism checks on various products, proper referencing, use of editorial style and language guides, and design and branding aligned to institutional guidance.

### LEVEL OF INTEREST IN SUBJECT MATTER OF PUBLICATIONS



It was noted that women's economic empowerment-related publications would generally be most read. This contradicts the previous survey that found COVID-19 was the most preferred and read publication in 2021.



68%

Ending violence against women was rated second



64.7%

Women peace and security women was rated third



54%

Governance, leadership and political participation was rated fourth



51%

Gender statistics was rated fifth



48.7%

Publications related Sustainable Development Goals was rated sixth



41.2%

Related to focusing on humanitarian action was rated seventh



38.4%

Women's innovation and technology



27.2%

Interested in publication about Climate



22.1%

of the respondents showing indications of interest. The interest in COVID-19 publications has significantly decreased because cases have subsided and normalized continentally.

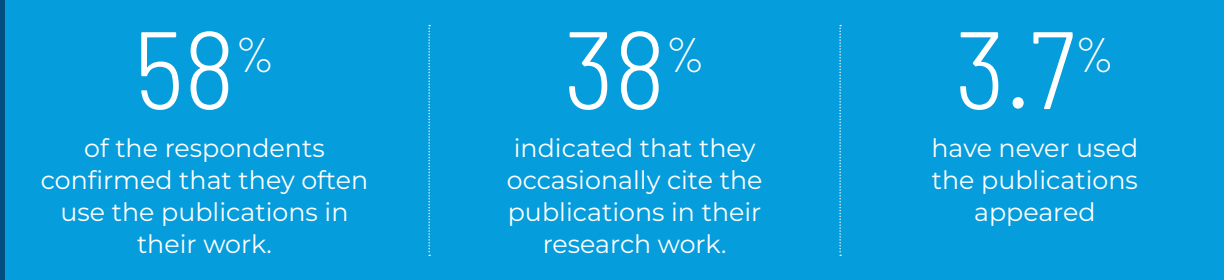
**FREQUENCY OF READERSHIP OF UN WOMEN ESARO PUBLICATIONS**



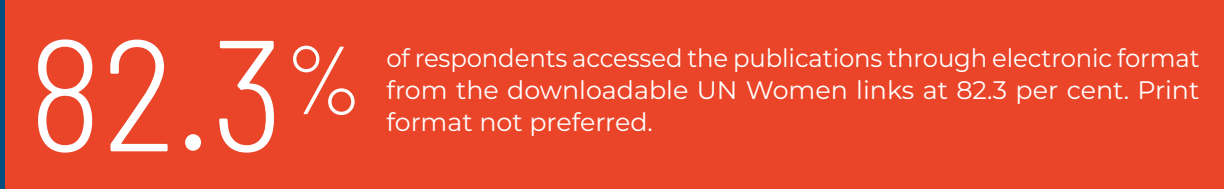
From the analysis, none of the respondents indicated that they were not aware of the existence of UN Women publications.

**REFERENCING UN WOMEN ESARO PUBLICATIONS**

Most respondents indicated that they have been using UN Women ESARO publications and citations in their programmatic work.

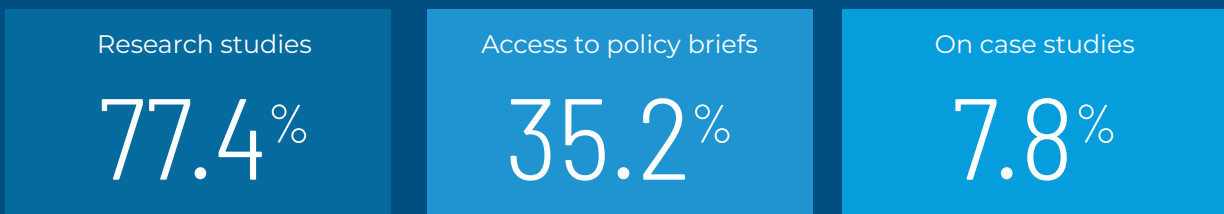


**CONVENIENT MEANS TO ACCESS UN WOMEN PUBLICATIONS**

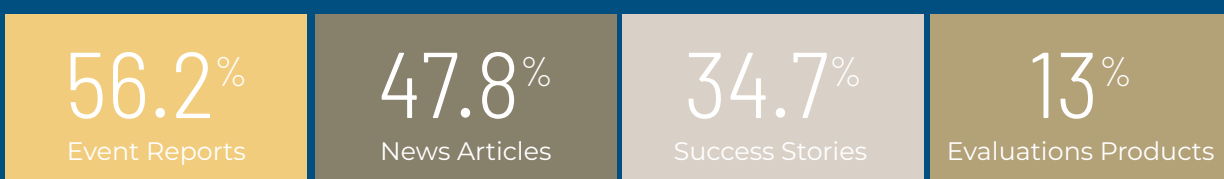


**TYPES OF UN WOMEN PUBLICATIONS CONSULTED BY RESPONDENTS**

From the survey, most respondents indicated that they consulted UN Women publications. from:



Preferred Publications



#### LANGUAGE OF ACCESS OF UN WOMEN PUBLICATIONS

91%

ENGLISH

4%

FRENCH

1.2%

PORTUGUESE

0.2%

SPANISH

0.1%

ARABIC

#### AWARENESS OF UN WOMEN PUBLICATIONS

The majority of the respondents participating in the survey were made aware of the publications through UN Women Africa website.

64.3%

stated that they accessed the publications through the website.

#### LAYOUT AND DESIGN

- Overall layout and design of UN Women ESARO publications received overwhelming approval from the respondents, who indicated that the publications are well designed with an excellent rating of (M=4.74; SD=0.979).
- The professional and great artistic compositions are given careful consideration, preparation, patience, and familiarity with the nuances of visual design, which blends well with the audience.
- Most of the publications and design layouts were viewed to be elegant and professionally done with the right colours.
- The style of writing the publications was also noted to be well done (M=4.21; SD=0.643) with simplistic and well-edited language, making it easy to understand for a wider audience.

#### AREA OF IMPROVEMENT-GAPS

- The survey, however, notes that the global corporate templates and guidance for publication management have not yet been operationalized at ESARO, as the researchers did not capture any filled templates.
- Currently, the templates are available but underutilised. These include corporate knowledge products concept note which should be filled before undertaking any research work; research evaluation form for clearance of the studies undertaken and knowledge products certification note which is also an accountability document.
- This survey recommends increasing accountability towards publication production by ensuring all thematic units fill in the related templates, have them approved following corporate requirements, and that all thematic units ascribe to the quality assurance guidance.
- From the key informant interviews, the guidance note was developed collaboratively with all units, and all users must be held accountable for utilization.

## CONCLUSION

- The findings of this survey have been reported to corroborate with the previous reader surveys and revealed consistent trends and a positive outlook for UN Women ESAR publications in terms of their quality, readability, being comprehensible and understandable with a confidence level of 97.0 per cent.
- Africa continent remains the highest region where readership levels are high, with 76.3 per cent of respondents. The survey shows that while many readers, just like in the two previous surveys, continue to indicate their interest in receiving publications via a mailing list or electronically, the demand for hard copies has been reconfirmed to decrease.
- UN Women's publications continue gaining relevance and interest from various stakeholders who feel they are readable, understandable and comprehensible.
- Packaging into various formats continues to elicit interest from the survey and reach the unreached featured prominently in the key informant interviews for the survey.
- Dissemination approaches and tools must ensure that the furthest is also reached with the publications through possible localization of all regional studies undertaken by UN Women in the region.
- The Knowledge Management and Research unit remains critical in enhancing readership and dissemination mechanisms and enhancing the quality production of the publications to a broader audience and should be more resourced to sustain its efforts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance quality and uniformity, there is a need for harmonized and centralized quality design and layout of all UN Women ESARO products, including publications from country offices.

Key informant interviews felt that the diverse packaging mechanisms, including executive summaries, fact sheets, key messages, journal papers, policy briefs and infographics, among other shorter versions, have accelerated progress towards ensuring that ESARO publications are readable and understandable to various targeted audiences. This practice should be sustained in the view of respondents and key informants interviewed.

Recommendations included intersecting with academia, universities and statistical institutions to improve the uptake of research evidence produced by UN Women ESARO for national and regional programmatic use and policy response.

It is also recommended that there is a need for robust production of policy briefs centred on informing regional and national programming at the country level and consideration of research publications at reputable peer reviewed journals.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fact sheet was developed by Jack Onyisi Abebe-UN Women East and Southern Africa Knowledge Management and Research Specialist, assisted by Wendy Akinyi-UN Women Consultant for Knowledge Management.





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