



The lessons in this leaflet have been extracted from the following evaluations:

- ◆ **South Africa (2015):** Mid-Term Evaluation of the Women Entrepreneurs Project
- ◆ **South Africa (2015)** Final Evaluation of the Pro-Poor Governance, Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment from a Human Rights Perspective in Namibia
- ◆ **UN Women Corporate Evaluation (2014):** UN Women's contribution to Women's Economic Empowerment
- ◆ **Sudan (2014):** Consolidating efforts that contribute to Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment in Sudan
- ◆ **Kenya (2014)** Government of Kenya (GoK)/UN Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (JP GEWE)
- ◆ **Zimbabwe (2013):** Final Evaluation of The Gender Support Programme (GSP)
- ◆ **Ethiopia (2013):** Joint Flagship Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (JP GEWE)
- ◆ **Kenya (2012):** Final Evaluation of Gender, Human Rights & Governance Programme 2007-2011
- ◆ **Kenya (2012):** Mid-Term Evaluation Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- ◆ **South Africa (2011)** Evaluation of UN Women Capacity Development Activities in Southern Africa (2009-2010)
- ◆ **Zimbabwe (2010):** Mid-Term Evaluation of the National Gender and Women's Empowerment Strategy & Action Plan and the Gender Support Programme (GSP)

All UN Women evaluations are available on GATE (www.gate.unwomen.org) & the Gender Equality Evaluation Portal (<http://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/en>)

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Lessons Learned from Evaluations: the Culture of Results in Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes

UN Women & Women's Economic Empowerment: What's the issue?

Investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home.

But they also remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation. Gender discrimination means that women often end up in insecure, low-wage jobs, and constitute a small minority of those in senior positions. It curtails access to economic assets such as land and loans. It limits participation in shaping economic and social policies. And, because women perform the bulk of household work, they often have little time left to pursue economic opportunities.

1. WHY is the Culture of Results important in Women's Economic Empowerment programmes?

2. WHAT do we know about effective results-based management and ensuring a Culture of Results?

3. HOW can UN Women improve its Culture of Results?



1 WHY is the Culture of Results important?

UNW WEE programmes seek to primarily provide women with skills and resources to increase their productivity and income. The long-term goal is to help women fulfill their economic potential and improve their well-being and that of their families and communities. Women's empowerment benefits whole societies. However, there has been a crucial gap in knowledge about how to effectively measure and determine the most effective interventions that directly advance women's economic opportunities empowerment.

- ◆ **Good programme planning** is difficult but essential. Clear understandable & realistic programme results need to be defined and linked with comprehensive monitoring & reporting activities. This will contribute to increasing the efficiency & effectiveness of the programme overall.

- ◆ **For evidence-based programming & decision-making:** M&E plays a central role in contributing to the evidence of best practices and lessons learned that can be drawn on during the programme planning & design phase, as well as for making adjustment of programme strategies.

- ◆ Evaluations note that significantly greater efforts should be made by UN Agencies to substantially strengthen monitoring in future programmes and projects that are being funded. This monitoring & technical capacity building role should be done with a view to identify gaps in the programme in the early stages and addressing them immediately.

WHAT do we know?

Lessons on 'Culture of Results' from UN Women WEE programmes across the region

From the Corporate evaluation of UN Women's contribution to women's economic empowerment (2015, UN Women Independent Evaluation Office)

Although a young organization, UN Women has already established the foundations of a results-based management system; this can be built on and more closely linked to the Theory of Change for WEE.

Key areas for consideration include:

- COs need to develop indicators that most consistently, usefully and meaningfully measure women's economic empowerment.
- At the CO level, effort should be made to measure changes against development goals and frameworks, and linking to human rights instruments, such as the concluding observations of CEDAW.
- Within the monitoring system, there is a heavy reliance on self-reporting by both COs and grantees. Much of this is narrative, with few examples of baselines and no systematic longitudinal tracking of changes amongst individual women. UNW offices should work to capture data in real time.
- Higher investment in planning, monitoring, data analysis, programmatic learning and reporting is crucial.
- Much M&E in UNW demonstrates a preference for qualitative approaches. The characteristics of WEE would seem to make it well placed as a thematic area to experiment both with more quantitative and empowerment/participatory approaches.

2 WHAT do we know about effective results-based management & ensuring a Culture of Results?

- Failure to plan on M&E from the outset of programme planning means that later activities in these areas will be cumbersome. A comprehensive M&E framework needs to be an integral component of the programme design & implementation process.
- Lack of resources:** across UN Women programmes & offices it has been identified that many offices do not adequately dedicate financial & human resources to M&E and RBM. Few offices have full-time dedicated M&E staff, rendering the overall process of M&E challenging.
- Institutional culture:** the culture of systematic and comprehensive data collection is not institutionalized in UN Women. For example, often baseline data is not collected—without this point of comparison it is challenging to measure change over time.
- Logical framework design:** Log frames are essential for tracking change. However, if they are poorly designed, for example with no measurable indicators, it can fail to serve the purpose of tracking results. Frameworks need to be designed to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) to ensure they are monitoring the relevant information for an evidence-based programme, and to learn how to improve services on a continuous basis. However, this often fails to be done.

3 HOW can UN Women improve its RBM & Culture of Results?

- Sound programme design:** due provisions should be made in the program design to devise monitoring & evaluation frameworks and to collect and process required data. UNW programmes must use baseline data to identify entry points for their work and include baseline data in programme log frames.
- There is a strong, identified, need to formulate more specific and measurable program objectives & outcomes across UNW work. These need to be specific, realistic, logical and measurable in terms of achievability and should be agreed by all stakeholders to foster ownership. Intervention logic and Theory of Change concepts needs to be reflected in the program design. Specific indicators shall be established and data gathering and analysis mechanisms need to be duly accommodated at the time of program design.
- Develop comprehensive M&E and Data Management Systems:** comprehensive M&E and data management systems that include dedicated resources and expertise should be developed at the outset of programmes to facilitate partners' efforts to collect feedback on the longer term results of their activities. M&E databases are vital for the tracking of indicators and beneficiaries, and to provide a quick access dashboard to monitor programme implementation.



HOW can we strengthen the 'Culture of Results' in WEE?

M&E systems and mechanisms need to be strengthened at every level and M&E capacities should be strengthened for successful programme & project implementation.

- Ensure logical frameworks and Theories of Change are clearly articulated & comprehensive:** they are vital as basis of programming, tracking of programmes and their indicators. UN Women, in their programmes, should make the programme logic i.e. Theory of Change, including the underlying assumptions, more explicit. Programmes that are based on an inadequate Theory of Change are less likely to be effective as plans and activities will not cover everything required to make positive changes in women's lives.
- Be realistic about data collection:** The means for regularly collecting monitoring data needs to be carefully considered. UNW offices need to determine which data is already in existence and available, thereafter what is in their scope to collect. In fragile environments, consider the practical means and methodologies for gathering this information, such as third party monitoring mechanisms.
- Make indicators SMART** (Specific, Measurable, Accurate, Realistic and Time bound) and remember that the number of indicators should be limited. As a general rule, no more than one indicator should be used to measure a given outcome. But if the outcome is multidimensional, it is better to use two indicators than to combine two distinct dimensions into a single indicator.

- Streamline reporting arrangements and clarify approaches, strategies, tools & methodologies.** Improved reporting practices help to minimize programming roadblocks & delays in disbursement of funds.
- Dedicate resources to M&E:** Capacities for Results Based Management (RBM) and evaluation need to be strengthened at country office level. This includes dedicated human & financial resources for designing, implementing and utilizing M&E systems and processes and establishing a culture of results.
- Build expertise & capacities:** Gaps in capacity and expertise among Implementing Partners (IPs) contribute to delays in implementation of activities & inadequate quality of monitoring, coordination & reporting. As such, capacity development on M&E should be integrated into agreements with IPs.

"DATA ON THEIR OWN WILL NOT CHANGE LIVES, BUT WE WILL NOT CHANGE LIVES WITHOUT THEM. WITH THE RIGHT METRICS AND ILLUMINATING INFORMATION, WE CAN INFORM POLICIES, CHECK ON PROGRESS AND HOLD LEADERS ACCOUNTABLE IF THEY FALL BEHIND ON THEIR COMMITMENTS. WE NEED 2030 TO BE THE POINT WHEN THE LIVES OF GIRLS AND WOMEN HAVE BEEN CHANGED IRREVERSIBLY, SUSTAINABLY AND SUBSTANTIVELY FOR THE BETTER."

— Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Nguka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women

TIP! INVEST IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ON M&E TO BENEFIT ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Identify gaps in M&E and RBM capacity & expertise, both amongst implementing partners and UN output lead agencies, and invest in addressing these.

Investing in capacity building on Results Based Management, proposal writing and narrative progress reports for the IPs is beneficial to all stakeholders. UNW programme managers will receive reports that are helpful for effective tracking of program implementation & IPs gain an understanding of the strategic role of information.

Evaluations also show the effectiveness of providing training on RBM to ensure IPs and UNW staff improve results-based reporting & move away from activity based reporting.

Within UNW, offices are recommended to invest in capacity development of staff on M&E, and dedicate resources to ensuring there are full-time M&E staff, so as to render the implementation of the necessary systems & processes less problematic.

