



## Lessons Learned from Evaluations: Promoting Organizational Effectiveness in UN Women Programmes

### UN Women: Organizational Effectiveness

UN Women's Strategic Plan (2014–2017) states that UN Women will continue to strengthen its capacity to deliver results. The UNW Results Framework then elaborates the following four priorities for operational effectiveness and efficiency :

1. to drive more effective and efficient UN system coordination and strategic partnerships;
2. to institutionalize a strong culture of results-based management, reporting, knowledge management and evaluation;
3. to enhance organizational effectiveness featuring robust capacity and efficiency at country and regional levels;
4. to mobilize and leverage adequate resources.

### 1

#### WHY is Organizational Effectiveness important?

This issue focuses on questions of Organizational Effectiveness which based on the meta-analysis conducted, seemed most applicable across all thematic areas of work.

UN Women continuously looks to strengthen its organizational effectiveness through working, for example, to enhance capacity and efficiency at country and regional level. Under this Output Cluster, UN Women seeks to:

1. Promote effective leadership and direction to advance the mandate and mission of the organization;
2. Ensure staff have the capacity and accountability for delivering results in gender equality and women's empowerment;
3. Promote in its operations a culture of risk management, accountability and transparency.

In addition to these elements, as an organization UN Women needs to give consideration to the means in which they can better facilitate the delivery of results and build confidence among partners. Evaluations have shown that elements such as financing constraints and weak knowledge management—especially in terms of sharing lessons between country-level and global work—are issues that UN Women needs to address in order to enhance organizational effectiveness.

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

- ◆ **UN Women Independent Evaluation Office (2014):** What can we learn from UN Women evaluations? A Meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN Women in 2013.
- ◆ **Ethiopia (2014)** Ending Violence Against Women - Joint UN Women/UNFPA Programme (2010-2013)
- ◆ **Kenya (2014)** Government of Kenya (GoK)/UN Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (JP GEWE)
- ◆ **Rwanda (2013)** Final Evaluation of Rwandan Government and ONE UN ISANGE One Stop Centre
- ◆ **Zimbabwe (2013):** Final Evaluation of The Gender Support Programme (GSP)
- ◆ **Uganda (2013):** Mid-Term Evaluation of the JP on Gender Equality (UNJPGE)
- ◆ **DRC, Rwanda, Burundi (2013):** Evaluation of UN Women Partnership with International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).
- ◆ **Regional/Thematic (2012):** Thematic Evaluation of UN Women action to end violence against women in the East & Horn of Africa sub-region
- ◆ **Kenya (2012):** Final Evaluation of Gender, Human Rights & governance Programme 2007-2011
- ◆ **Sudan (2011)** Final Evaluation: Defending and securing the human rights of women and girls in the humanitarian crisis, South Darfur, Sudan, July 2008 - July 2010
- ◆ **South Africa (2011)** Evaluation of UN Women Capacity Development Activities in Southern Africa (2009-2010)

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

# What do we know?

## Lessons on 'Organizational Effectiveness from UN Women programmes across the region'

**Example:** Achieving Gender Equality through Operational Effectiveness in Joint Programmes

Considering UN Women's triple mandate (normative, operational, coordination), the Agency is well positioned to engage in Joint Programmes on Gender Equality. Mainstreaming of gender equality across all agencies and at all levels of the United Nations system is critical for the progress in achieving gender equality, eliminating violence against women and empowering their participation in the social, political and economic spheres of society. In this regard, joint programmes continue to be greatly encouraged, as to avoid duplication, enhance the effectiveness of programmes, ensure clear division of labour and make the best use of agencies' expertise and strengths.

Therefore, for UN Women to maximize its impact from involvement in JPs, a number of key elements around organization effectiveness should be considered:

- ◆ Establish clear and comprehensive monitoring & accountability mechanism to ensure effective and efficient implementation
- ◆ Consider establishing a single budget which will give the programme a better chance of effectively monitoring the mobilization & utilization of funds
- ◆ Ensure national ownership and leadership through consultation & membership in the programme management structures.

JPs require responsive structures & controls to monitor operational, financial, development and reputational risk regularly and to elevate as necessary to decision making structures.

### TIP! ENSURE PROPER HANOVERS TO CAPITALIZE ON INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

Lack of mechanisms for proper handover and transfer of responsibilities, documents, information and knowledge at times of staff turnover, both within UN Women and within partners, can compromise the capacity of institutions to undertake effective and, most importantly, sustainable gender work.

## WHAT challenges are faced for ensuring Organizational Effectiveness in UN Women programmes?

- ◆ UN Women is facing many of the challenges of a relatively young organizations, especially in terms of clarifying role and mandate, and developing synergies across different areas of work. Nevertheless, the creation of UN Women has increased the strategic presence and credibility of gender work in the UN system. This enhanced visibility has brought with it high expectations that are proving to be a challenge for the organization to meet, especially at country level.
- ◆ At the center of these issues are 2 factors repeatedly highlighted by evaluations: **knowledge management and financing.**
- ◆ **Knowledge management:** UN Women is strategically positioned to contribute to knowledge generation and management around gender issues. However, evaluations show this area of work is stronger at the global level—with HQ making more contribution than COs to knowledge generation. As such, these areas of work need to be strengthened at the decentralized level.
- ◆ **Financing:** lack of availability of funds is a constraint to organizational effectiveness that is identified in many evaluations. This is exacerbated by delays in disbursement at the programme level.

Evaluations have identified two areas with challenges in terms of UN Women's Organizational Effectiveness:

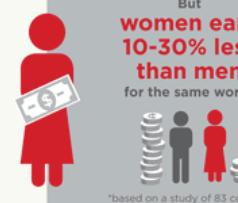
1. **Those that come from within UN Women itself:** this includes inefficient systems and structures that hamper timely approval and disbursement of funds. Evaluations show that delays in the funds disbursement to implementing partners have a negative impact on delivery of results. Efficient internal systems can also help build confidence amongst UNW current and future potential partners.
2. **Those that arise from engagement with implementing partners:** this mainly relates to lack of partner capacities in areas such as timely reporting and financial management. Non-responsiveness and delays will hamper monitoring, internal and donor reporting processes.

Evaluations have also highlighted that UN Women's Organizational Effectiveness can be enhanced through coordinated engagement with other UN Agencies and partners so that each leverages its comparative advantage. The pooling of resources and expertise through partnerships and inter-agency relationships can help to improve UN Women's operational efficiency.



## WAGES

**At least 50% of the world's women are in paid wage and salary employment,** an increase from 40% in the 1990s.



## HOW can UN Women improve Organizational Effectiveness?

## 3

### HOW can UN Women better ensure Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency?

- ◆ **Build capacity for UN Women staff:** particularly on financial management, programme management, monitoring and evaluation—to aid programme implementation processes and increase overall organizational efficiency.
- ◆ **Build capacity of partners:** evaluations also highlight monitoring, reporting and financial management as important areas for development.
- ◆ **Maximize resources and expertise:** as a young UN Agency, UN Women has to position itself strategically in order to maximize resources and expertise. Joint Programmes can potentially be a particularly good avenue for this.
- ◆ **Smoothen funds transfers to partners** by putting in place critical financial management capacities at the programme level. In cases where full Delegation of Authority in a CO has not been established, alternative solutions are required to reduce time lag from approval to disbursement of funds. This is particularly critical in emergency situations.
- ◆ **Ensure the development of adequate policies, systems & structures:** responsive structures and controls to monitor operational, financial, development and reputational risk regularly are required; and for the elevation of issues to decision makers as necessary.
- ◆ **Knowledge management capabilities need to be decentralized and linked to global knowledge management systems.** Global policy and normative work and -knowledge needs to be better connected with, and grounded in country level work and experiences. COs will need to work to identify their key KM requirements and link with, for example, the Regional Office KM Specialist for further practical guidance. Knowledge & Information Management systems should be integrated into programmes.
- ◆ **Foster inter-agency partnerships:** UNW programme evaluations have identified the benefits for efficiency from fostering inter-agency work; this strengthens the enabling environment and also engages existing structures for broader & more sustainable impact.
- ◆ **Encourage a long-term approach & partnerships:** Partnership agreements should be made for longer periods and projects should be implemented with partners in 3-5 years cycles. The longer duration of projects will provide sufficient time and resources to address prevailing issues and move towards desired impacts.
- ◆ **Ensure sound programme design:** robust and high quality logical frameworks and performance monitoring frameworks should be developed for all programmes without exception.
- ◆ **Put in place rigorous monitoring:** to ensure, for example, early detection of financial irregularities between reports & disbursements, and to maintain oversight of activity implementation.

