

REPORT

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC  
EMPOWERMENT  
PROGRAMME THEMATIC  
EVALUATION

## Acknowledgments

The thematic evaluation of the women's economic empowerment report was developed by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) for UN Women Country Team in Nepal.

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# WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME THEMATIC EVALUATION



**UN WOMEN NEPAL**

January 2020

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AWEE	Advancing Women’s Economic Empowerment
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EMG	Evaluation Management Group
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FWW	Future We Want
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment
GOF	Government of Finland
GON	Government of Nepal
HRBA	Human Rights-based Approach
IOM	International Office of Migration
IP	Implementation Partner
KII	Key Informant Interview
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoFAGA	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration
MoWCSC	Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens
NCO	Nepal Country Office
NGO	Non- Government Organisation
NSDS	National Strategy for Development of Statistics
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PFM	Performance Monitoring Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SN	Strategic Note
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TVTE	Technical
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VfM	Value for Money
WEE	Women’s Economic Empowerment

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 Evaluation description and methodology

The main purpose of this thematic evaluation was to contribute to enhancing UN Women NCO's approach to WEE and strengthening implementation of the 2018- 2022 Strategic Note. The evaluation generated knowledge and organizational learning on what works and doesn't to advance gender equality through women's economic empowerment and leadership.

The overall goal of the thematic evaluation was to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of UN Women NCO's WEE programmes. To achieve this goal, the evaluation focused on the following specific objectives:

1. Assess the relevance of UN Women Nepal's WEE approach to advancing gender equality in Nepal in the context of federalism and the 2015 Constitution of Nepal;
2. Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progress towards the achievement of results defined in the 2014-2017 and 2018-22 strategic plans;
3. Analyse how a human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the WEE area of work;
4. Identify and validate lessons learned, good practice examples and innovations of work supported by UN Women Nepal;
5. Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UN Women's WEE strategies and approaches.

One programme Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment (AWEE) and one Project 'The way forward' (FWW) were used to focus data collection and analysis for this evaluation.

This thematic evaluation analysed the planning and implementation of WEE programme interventions, results and assessed progress towards UN Women's strategic goal for WEE covering 2014 to mid-year 2019. It took into consideration the approach to WEE identified in the NCO Strategic Note for 2018-2022 and WEE programming activities with the aim of providing strategic inputs to the process. This evaluation was designed as follows:

- The ToC for the two interventions was constructed to identify causal links and the overall rationale of the two interventions; to test assumptions and test how much interventions planned within the programme are aligned with the WEE ToC.
- Stakeholders were identified, to understand the roles of actors in the conception and delivery and to test how the relationships between implementers affect effectiveness of delivery.
- The main project documents (Strategic notes, project reports and results documents) were reviewed.
- Consultation with primary stakeholders to triangulate validity of causal pathways and enhance usability of findings was organised.

The evaluation followed the UN Women's gender-responsive and HRBA guidelines for evaluation.

## 1.2 Conclusions

### 1.2.1 Relevance

**Evidence shows that UN Women Economic Empowerment Programme is relevant in Nepal for overall gender equality and women empowerment. It is also relevant to the current Nepali policy and social context.** The SN are aligned with the GoN's commitment to advance gender equality. The federal system with the decentralisation and new responsibilities of newly elected representatives has created an unprecedented need for capacity building at all levels of governance in the country which WEE is partially trying to address. The new constitution also offers a space to work on gender equality, and there is a recognition of the importance of achieving economic empowerment for women to achieve Planet 50:50. Key Informants have emphasised the need to focus on women's economic empowerment as a way to contribute towards equality between the genders.

### 1.2.2 Efficiency

**UN Women in the WEE programme largely adopts the corporate guidelines** in managing resource, and engaging stakeholders specially in developing the strategies. Funds were utilised as planned to reach the beneficiaries. However, some attention to the results framework to integrate more outcome focus indicators would strengthen the capacity to improve reflective practice to measure change, i.e., maximizes the outcomes with limited resources.

### 1.2.3 Effectiveness

**The effectiveness of UN Women's WEE programming is mixed. Some constraints are beyond the NCO's control. Progress in normative work at policy has been slower than expected** due to the transition context; **however normative work in terms of sensitising citizens has achieved momentum** by increasing the number of trained and informed excluded women about their rights. Operationally the work with women on the ground has shown progress in terms of delivering outputs; results on impacts are more mixed and the ability for women to translate new skills into income or larger scale business remain a challenge for many women because of on-going structural constraints which will require a longer time span commitment, especially if transformative change is to be achieved. The biggest undisputable impact, commented on by women, men and various actors is the change in women's attitude and self confidence in their rights and ability to claim their rights, access information and contribute to public life.

More excluded women involved in the interventions are able to generate income as a result of WEE interventions and this is starting to have an impact on their place in the family and on gender dynamics. However, the ability for women to translate new skills into more sustainable and substantial income or larger scale business remain a challenge for many women. There was also limited evidence that the most excluded women have been reached and involved.

The current political context has made it difficult for UN Women to influence macro-economic policies as hoped. And finally, activities implemented within AWEE and FWW have targeted excluded women



and their economic empowerment but they have not specifically addressed climate resilience, agriculture or the energy sector.

Whilst there is evidence that some vulnerable women involved in the programme and project have improved their income generation potential it is difficult to conclude on their level of resilience to climate change and disaster: therefore the team concludes that there are some encouraging signs of WEE contribution towards Planet 50:50 and equality between men and women may be improved by 2022. However how much WEE will have contributed to this will be difficult to determine.

#### 1.2.4 Gender equality and human rights

**UN Women's WEE approach is aligned to HRBA and gender equality at the programme level.** The strategic note, the ToC the WEE programme and the AWEE and FWW proposal all are in line with a human rights based approach (HRBA) to programming and gender equality objectives and to Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Objectives. The political context remains the main challenge to advance gender equality in the country as implementation of existing legislation is slow and work on normative issues is disrupted by political instability.

The WEE ToC is based on 3 strands: 1) **Sensitizing** men, youth and faith-leaders on the constraints presented by cultural norms; 2) **Developing and implementing** macro-economic policies supporting WEE and 3) **Testing and adopting for upscaling** a substantive equality approach to women's economic empowerment in select target sectors for income generation and improved climate resilient livelihoods. The second strand has seen limited activities due to the current transition context. Arguably there have been activities in the first and third strands. However, the evaluation team would argue that whilst the 'testing' of approaches has happened there is a missing link between the 'testing' and 'upscaling' at three levels:

- In order to deliver lessons for upscaling the 'testing' would need a design in the programming where variables are identical or at least comparable. Trying out different activities (with different time frames and length) in different locations with different populations of women all facing different issues, without closely monitoring processes of change, makes it difficult to identify clear cause and effect results chains and thus make clear recommendations.
- The limited programmatic focus on learning itself makes it more difficult to draw lessons. The M&E framework is results focused encouraging partners to report on their outputs and outcomes rather than to be analytical.
- And finally, the lack of direct connection with the provincial and municipality levels during planning and implementation means that the programme is perceived as just another intervention rather than an opportunity to co-test and co-learn between UN-Women, its partners and the local authorities.

There is no doubt that most women participants to various activities proposed under AWEE and FWW have benefitted. However, to be an effective programme from which lessons can be drawn for policy advocacy and for contributing to transformational change, WEE will need UN Women to play a stronger coordination facilitation role between partners and with local authorities and develop a more explicit learning culture within WEE.

## 1.3 Recommendations

### 1.3.1 Strengthen the programmatic approach

A coordinating and facilitation between the various strands and partners are needed. Fostering a common understanding amongst partners of the overall programmatic strategy and the concept of transformational change will help partners becoming partners rather than being service providers;

1.3.1.1 **Timing of interventions** need to be dictated by the logic of the programme and be less dependent on procurement and contractual delays. Partners could work more in parallel or in a synchronistic way with each other to increase effectiveness and efficiency;

1.3.1.2 UN Women needs to play a central role in **promoting reflection and learning** with its partners as well as within the programme team; this can happen through organising learning events with field staff of partners and local representatives since they are the ones who know what is happening on the ground; these events should focus on lessons learnt or be the opportunity to brainstorm on specific learning questions (as opposed to sharing project updates);

1.3.1.3 A **M&E system supportive of programmatic learning** will be useful; the ToC could be developed more to make pathways of change more detailed and explicit; data along the cause and effect chain need to be collected to be able to assess the likelihood of contribution; baselines need to be developed for sample beneficiaries populations to be able to monitor progress towards outcomes. A more participatory approach to M&E (such through beneficiary assessment for example) would also strengthen the capacity of local authorities and partners;

**1.3.2 Deepen understanding of target populations** by supporting action research projects embedded within interventions to scrutinise how social differences and intersectionality affect women's ability to fully benefit from interventions or maintain exclusion. Action research promotes reflection and provides the opportunity for live lessons learnt to be applied to change course of interventions. This would help tailoring interventions to specific categories of women more effectively and will focus partners on reflecting and learning what works for who and why/how.

**1.3.3 Embed the programme within the local structures** by working more explicitly with municipalities by:

1.3.3.1 **Involving municipalities in local needs assessments**, the choice of activities, the target of beneficiaries and the monitoring; align WEE interventions to GESI municipal plans and budgets Find entry points such as existing government programmes.

1.3.3.2 **Collaborate with business organisations or local municipalities associations**  
This may remain a challenge for as long as political uncertainty affects local governance.

**1.3.4 Continue work along the supply chain and also invest in demand creation:** many donors, federal and local government initiatives focus on skills building, but what is needed is helping women scaling up, branding, business development, quality control, and access to finance. Perhaps interventions supported by WEE should focus more on scaling up equality approach for women's economic empowerment in target sectors. Also invest in demand side by bringing those women have yet to establish link with income generating activities.

**1.3.5 A stronger focus on migration upstream:** Nepal's explicit policy of exporting labour abroad has a huge impact (both positive and negative) on Nepali society and especially on women. Whether women are trafficked or excluded returnees, whether they have been sexually assaulted, exploited or whether they have relatives abroad, their lives are being affected. Though this was not a focus of the evaluation the theme emerged in different contexts as a factor influencing WEE: migration can lead to social exclusion for returnees, but it can also provide, financial capital, impetus for risk taking and enterprise spirit, or it can demotivate as remittances can make small scale enterprises un-competitive. All these aspects need further study, to separate myths from reality. But women also need more information and better awareness to migrate safely if they chose to do so. A comprehensive study could be recommended to unfold the issues of women migration and its effect on social dimension. This would also generate valuable insights into barriers and opportunities to WEE.

# 2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

## 2.1 Introduction

The present report is the final product of the Thematic Evaluation of the UN Women's Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) programme.

The evaluation was conducted by an external independent team managed by Oxford Policy Management (OPM) and commissioned by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Nepal Country Office (NCO) with the involvement of the Evaluation Management Group (EMG) and the Evaluation Reference Group (ERG). The team included Dr Marlène Buchy (International Team Leader), Dr Kushum Shakya, Deepa Shakya, Sanju Joshi (National Evaluators), Rakesh Karna (Project Manager) and finally managed by Dr. Devendra Gnawali (OPM). The evaluation was conducted between the 25th of June and 30th December 2019.

The aim of the report is to provide overarching and synthesized analysis, findings, lessons learnt, conclusions and recommendations based on data and information collected and analysed during the evaluation process.

As per the Terms of reference (ToR), the main users of the evaluation findings and recommendations are intended to be donors of UN Women's WEE programming, UN Women staff in Nepal, other country offices, partners and stakeholders involved in promoting women's economic empowerment.

In order to support institutional learning based on the evaluation report, the evaluation team in coordination with UN Women presented findings to the ERG and supported UN Women NCO in a dissemination workshop at the national level.

The report is presented in seven sections:

**Section 1** presents executive summary

**Section 2** presents the background and context of the evaluation, its purpose, objectives and scope and a description of the WEE programme.

**Section 3** includes a summary of the evaluation approach, methods and limitations.

**Section 4** presents the evaluation findings organized around the evaluation questions.

**Section 5** presents conclusions

**Section 6** presents lessons learned identified during the evaluation process.

**Section 7** includes the key recommendations.

## 2.2 Background

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) leads and coordinates United Nations System efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world. It provides strong and coherent leadership in support of National priorities and efforts, building effective partnerships with government, civil society and other relevant actors. The work of UN Women is guided by its integrated mandates through normative, operational and coordination work.

In Nepal, UN Women works in partnership with the Government of Nepal (GoN), UN system, civil society and development partners to advance gender equality and empowerment for Nepali women, who face multiple forms of discrimination and exclusion. The work of the Nepal Country Office (NCO) is guided by its Strategic Note (SN) and Annual Work Plan (AWP).

The overall goal of UN Women Nepal Country Office (NCO) is to achieve gender equality and social inclusion and empower women and girls in Nepal to realise their human rights. Through the women's economic empowerment (WEE) programming, the NCO seeks to promote income security, better jobs and economic independence of vulnerable women, taking into account the vulnerability of women and girls in the contexts of disaster risk and climatic changes. This will contribute to changes to ensure that vulnerable women's groups in Nepal have income generation opportunities and are resilient to climate change and disasters that affect their livelihoods by 2022 (Outcome 2, SN 2018-22). In taking a substantive equality approach to WEE, the UN Women NCO will address the complex nexus of economic, social and structural challenges and barriers that excluded and marginalized women face when entering, participating and contributing in the economy. When taken together, the NCO's WEE initiatives are designed to be holistic in accounting for women's unequal power, experiences, access to opportunities, and decision making in the different dimensions of their lives, including in their families and communities, as well as in relation to the public policies and programmes which impact them directly and indirectly. The evaluation covers WEE programming but focuses on one programme and one project which are used as cases for this thematic evaluation: Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment (AWEE) – Ensuring Nepal's Sustainable and Equitable Development (2015–2017) and The Future We Want (FWW): creating sustainable foundations for addressing human trafficking and unsafe migration of women and girls in Nepal (2016- 2019).

The work of UN Women in Nepal is articulated around three components with Women's economic Empowerment related to Outcome 3 "Women have income security, better jobs and economic autonomy". This is also linked to UN Women global Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 Outcome 3. As per the NCO SN 2018-2022, the programme has one outcome (Outcome 2.1) "vulnerable women's groups in Nepal have income generation opportunities and are resilient to climate change and disasters that affect their livelihoods by 2022".

The expected outputs of WEE are the following:

- Planet 50:50 Nepal advanced by engaging men/boys, interfaith leaders, vulnerable groups and youth networks in addressing adverse social and economic norms, structural barriers, and gender-based discrimination;

- Key line ministries and select local governments have increased technical capacity to develop and implement gender responsive macroeconomic policies and sectoral policies (agriculture, energy, labour, industry and DRR) developed and implemented by key line ministries to advance the implementation of SDG 5 and 8; and
- A substantive equality approach to women's economic empowerment tested and adopted in select target sectors (agriculture, energy) for income generation, improved climate resilient livelihoods and to address safe migration with vulnerable women's groups.

## **AWEE**

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC) with the financial support of the Government of Finland (GoF), the UN Women NCO is implementing AWEE in its extended phase till December 2019.

This programme builds on a partnership with the relevant federal government entities, such as the Vocational Skill Development Training Centre, civil society organizations, and development partners with a specific focus on the field implementation in the following six districts: Sunsari, Kavre, Makwanpur, Nawalparasi, Banke and Kailali. The six districts were identified in partnership with a consortium of six networks which represent six types of excluded women<sup>1</sup> whom this programme specifically targeted. The programme focuses on capacity building and strengthening of different stakeholders to increase the capacity of the enabling environment to support women's economic empowerment.

AWEE's objectives are:

- to enhance the capacity of selected Government officials at the national and district level to integrate and monitor the inclusion of gender equality provisions in economic policies;
- to contribute to ensuring that networks of excluded women have the skills and enterprise development assistance for sustainable livelihoods;
- to increase the capacity and opportunity of networks of excluded women to influence local and national decision-making processes for sustainable development; and
- to strengthen the evidence base for policy advocacy on women's economic empowerment and rights.

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<sup>1</sup> UN Women identifies six excluded women's groups: Returnee Women Migrant Workers; Survivors of Trafficking; Rural Women; Home-based Workers; Women Living with HIV; Conflict Affected Women.

To meet these objectives, AWEE has a following package of activities. See Box 1

**Box 1: The AWEE package areas of interventions**

Policy advocacy

Capacity development (e.g. orientation, knowledge building, training) of officials of the federal line ministries and local governments

Vocational skills development

Entrepreneurship development

Business start-up/development services

Pilot of an e-rickshaw business model

Leadership development

Advocacy campaign

Research study

Provisions of vocational skills and entrepreneurship training and business development services

Capacity Development of Partner Organizations on Results-Based Management and Report Writing.

**FWW**

The second intervention, FWW project is also managed by UN Women in collaboration with IOM, and funded by Zonta International, aims to help survivors of trafficking and returnee women migrant workers to enjoy fundamental freedoms and economic and personal security in Dhading and Sindhupalchowk districts. This project has three expected outcomes:

- Create an enabling environment in homes and communities to address structural barriers, gender-based discrimination and stereotypical intergenerational socialization patterns in project districts;
- Enhance capacity of women migrant workers and survivors of trafficking to become independent economic actors in select project districts;
- Enhance coherence/synergy between institutions and policies on the issues of national gender equality commitments particularly in the areas of foreign employment and human trafficking.

Activities on the ground were implemented by two Nepalese CSOs, F-Skills and Media Advocacy group.

FWW's major areas of interventions (See Box 2)

**Box 2: The FWW package areas of interventions**

Policy advice to Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen

Capacity development (e.g. orientation, knowledge building, training) of officials of the federal line ministries and local governments

Advocacy campaign

Vocational skills development

Entrepreneurship development

Business start-up/development services

Right to Information

In both cases, each package of activities is delivered through partnerships between UN Women and multiple local NGOs (in the case of AWEE) and with IOM and its partners in the case of FWW. Both the AWEE programme and the FWW project are committed to Leave no One Behind (LNOB) as they seek out the most vulnerable and excluded sections of women through a consortium of six networks of excluded women specially returnee women migrant workers, survivors, rural women, home-based workers, women living with HIV and conflict affected women. Inherent to the WEE approach is the commitment that all women should be given the support they need to embrace economic development opportunities. This is why, attending to different weaknesses and short comings, AWEE and FWW attempt to address a wide range of issues ranging from skills and business development to political literacy and challenges to social norms.

### 2.3 Programme Theory of Change

The Theory of Change for WEE is articulated around 3 hypothesis:

- (1) **if** men, faith-based leaders and youth are mobilized to tackle the social and cultural norms which result in gender-based discrimination,
- (2) **If** gender-responsive macroeconomic policies and sectoral policies (including agriculture, labour and energy) are developed and implemented to promote economic empowerment and resilience of vulnerable women and
- (3) **If** a substantive equality approach to women's economic empowerment is tested and adopted for upscaling in select target sectors for income generation and improved climate resilient livelihoods,

**then** Planet 50:50 will be advanced in Nepal by 2022, and vulnerable women's groups in Nepal have income generation opportunities and are resilient to climate change and disasters,

**because** economic, social and structural challenges and barriers which vulnerable women face when entering, participating in and contributing to the economy will be transformed.

For this evaluation, we developed a visual representation of AWEE and FWW ToCs in relation to WEE's ToC (see diagram) to assess the coherence between these interventions and the overall NCO programme.

The WEE initiatives are based on a number of key assumptions with the dominant one being that gender discriminatory behaviour, norms and traditional harmful practices continue to deny women the full enjoyment of their human rights. This in turn prevents women to fully develop their economic potential. Thus, the WEE ToC puts the emphasis on changing social norms through working on awareness and on institutions but also on influencing policies to create an enabling environment for women.

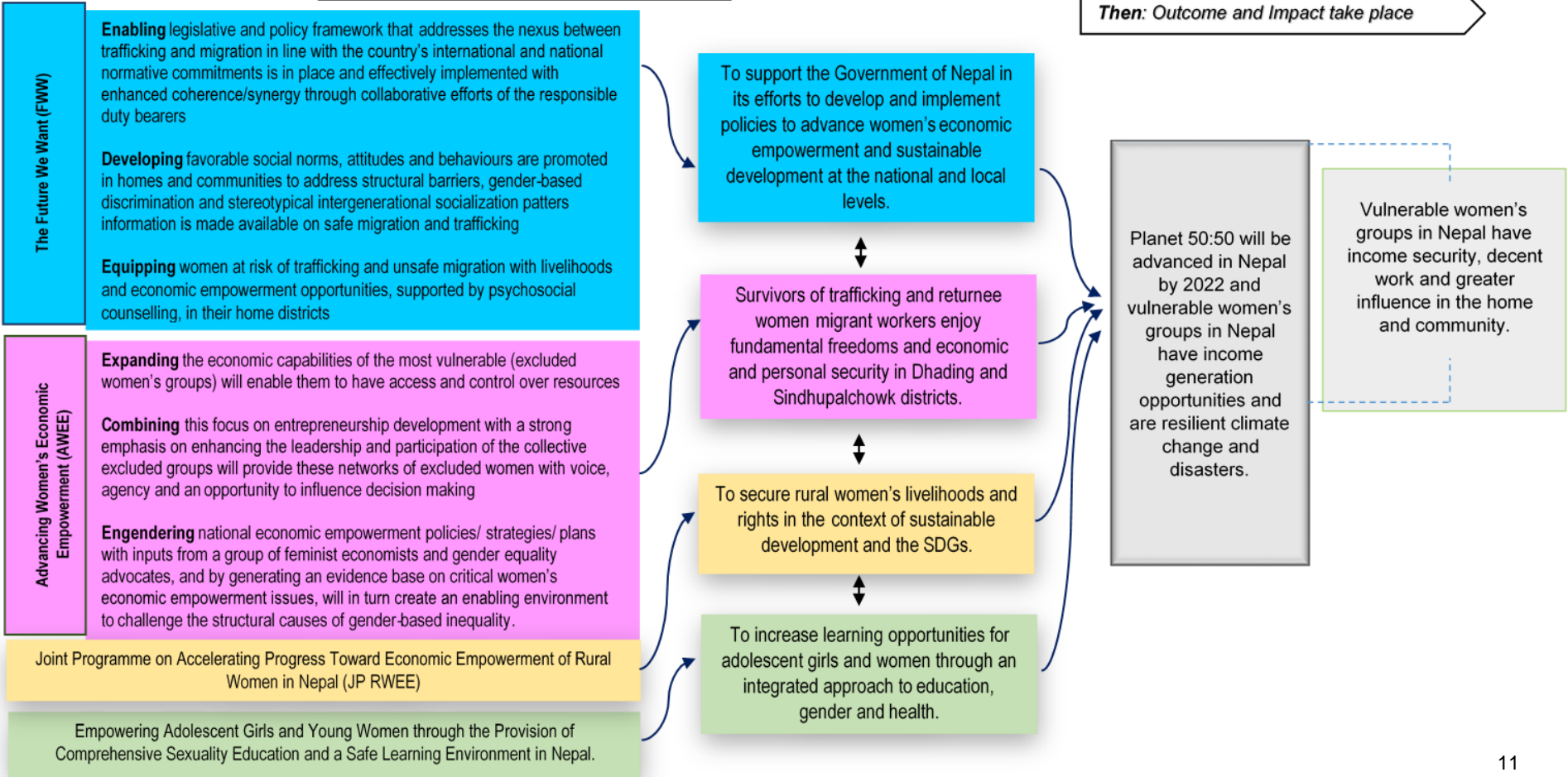


## Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Theory of Change

If (1) men, faith-based leaders and youth are mobilized to tackle the social and cultural norms which result in gender-based discrimination, (2) If gender-responsive macroeconomic policies and sectoral policies (including agriculture, labour and energy) are developed and implemented to promote economic empowerment and resilience of vulnerable women and (3) If a substantive equality approach to women's economic empowerment is tested and adopted for upscaling in select target sectors for income generation and improved climate resilient livelihoods, **then** Planet 50:50 will be advanced in Nepal by 2022, and vulnerable women's groups in Nepal have income generation opportunities and are resilient to climate change and disasters, **because** economic, social and structural challenges and barriers which vulnerable women face when entering, participating in and contributing to the economy will be transformed.

*IF: Outputs and Intermediate Outcomes*

*Then: Outcome and Impact take place*



## 2.4 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The main purpose of this thematic evaluation is to contribute to enhancing UN Women NCO's approach to WEE and strengthening implementation of the 2018- 2022 Strategic Note. The evaluation generated knowledge and organizational learning on what works and doesn't to advance gender equality through women's economic empowerment and leadership. Thus, the findings will be used for strategic revisions and programmatic decisions. The evaluation will also support accountability to donors and partners for implementation and results of specific WEE programme/project.

The overall goal of the thematic evaluation was to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of UN Women NCO's WEE programmes. To achieve this goal, the evaluation focused on the following specific objectives:

1. Assess the relevance of UN Women Nepal's WEE approach to advancing gender equality in Nepal in the context of federalism and the 2015 Constitution of Nepal;
2. Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progress towards the achievement of results defined in the 2014-2017 and 2018-22 strategic plans;
3. Analyse how a human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the WEE area of work;
4. Identify and validate lessons learned, good practice examples and innovations of work supported by UN Women Nepal;
5. Provide actionable recommendations with respect to UN Women's WEE strategies and approaches.

**Table 1: Evaluation Matrix**

Overall Questions	Sub-questions	Sources of data	Tools/stakeholders
<p><b>How relevant has UN Women Nepal's WEE approach been in advancing gender equality in Nepal in the context of federalism and the 2015 Constitution?</b></p>	<p>To what extent does UN Women's work on WEE address the challenges and opportunities of the transition to a federal system of governance in Nepal and how can this be further enhanced?</p> <p>To what extent the work on WEE addresses development and policy priorities of the Government of Nepal focusing on the needs of Nepali women and girls, at individual and collective level, especially of those sub-groups who are from marginalized and vulnerable groups?</p>	<p>National level policy documents, project documents of AWEE programme and FWW project, Key informants</p>	<p>Key informants semi structured interviews (CSOs, GoN representatives, donors, private sector actors) and document analysis (GoN and projects)</p>
<p><b>How effective UN Women contributions have been in progress towards achievement of results defined in country strategic notes of 2014-17 and 2018-22?</b></p>	<p>What is the progress towards intended results (normative, operational and coordination) on WEE and how has UN Women contributed to these? Elaborate based on case studies from AWEE programme and FWW project.</p> <p>What has been the contribution of WEE programme to facilitate enabling macro-economic and sectoral policy environment in Nepal that prioritizes women's economic empowerment?</p> <p>What are enabling and limiting factors that affected the achievement of results?</p>	<p>Projects results framework of AWEE programme and FWW project Projects documents of AWEE programme and FWW project Primary data collection in AWEE and FWW districts</p>	<p>ToC review Key informants (UN Women, relevant donors, government partners, UN Women implementing partners) Semi-structured interviews of project staff, Project implementing partners Group semi structured interviews of project beneficiaries (women, men, young people) Document analysis</p>

	And, what actions need to be taken to overcome any barriers that limit progress?		
<b>How the organizational Efficiency contributed in progress towards the achievement of results defined in 2014-17 and 2018-22 strategic plans.</b>	<p>How have operational mechanisms (procedures, management arrangements, etc.) affected implementation and results of WEE programming and what changes could make UN Women Nepal's approach to WEE more efficient and effective?</p> <p>How can the programme monitoring and evaluation systems strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme implementation?</p> <p>Were the resources for economic empowerment programme managed in transparent and accountable manner which promotes equitable and sustainable development?</p>	<p>Assessment of value for money, the project team's clarity on roles and responsibilities mechanism to engage implementing partners and other service providers (transparency, ethics, procurement policies etc.)</p> <p>Project documents of AWEE programme and FWW project</p> <p>Primary data collection</p>	<p>UN Women and project Staff semi-structured interviews.</p> <p>Key information interviews (KIIs) with the implementing partners and service providers.</p>
<b>To what extent has UN Women's approach integrated gender equality and human rights in the design and implementation of programmes?</b>	<p>Whether the issues were taken into consideration and analysed while designing the projects</p> <p>Were there any constraints (e.g., political, practical, bureaucratic, etc.) to addressing human rights and gender equality efficiently during implementation?</p> <p>What level of effort was made to overcome these challenges?</p>	<p>Assessment of the project strategies, theories of change and interaction with the project stakeholders and participants of AWEE programme and FWW related project programming</p>	<p>Group discussions/ brainstorming in selected project sites with staff and beneficiaries.</p> <p>Key UN Women staff and project partners interviews.</p> <p>Review of Strategic notes and annual work plans</p>

	To what extent has the programme engaged key beneficiaries, especially those representing marginalized community and belonging to vulnerable group, in planning and monitoring of the intervention.		
<b>What are the key lessons learnt by the WEE programme that worked or did not work?</b>	<p>What are the perceived and real barriers or enablers?</p> <p>What good practices are worth highlighting?</p> <p>What innovative approaches worked?</p>	<p>Project documents, of AWEE programme and FWW project</p> <p>Primary data collection In AWEE and FWW districts</p>	<p>Group discussions/ brainstorming in selected project sites with staff and beneficiaries, participatory ranking exercises.</p> <p>Key UN Women staff and project partners interviews and GoN representatives.</p>

This thematic evaluation analysed the planning and implementation of WEE programme interventions, results and assessed progress towards UN Women’s strategic goal for WEE covering 2014 to mid-year 2019. It took into consideration the approach to WEE identified in the NCO Strategic Note for 2018-2022 and WEE programming activities with the aim of providing strategic inputs to the process. The scope of the evaluation covered all WEE programming by UN Women Nepal across the three mandates (normative, operational and coordination) by taking two specific cases of the AWEE programme and FWW project.

Considering the mandates to incorporate human rights and gender equality in all UN work and the UN Women Evaluation Policy, which promotes the integration of women’s rights and gender equality principles, these are fundamental to the approach of this evaluation.

# 3. METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Evaluation methodology

This is a thematic theory-based evaluation of the WEE programme. Thematic evaluations are focused on specific themes and evaluates a selection of development interventions. The purpose is to learn from the programme implementation and improve the outcomes of interventions using a forward-looking approach.

This evaluation was designed as follows:

- The ToC for the two interventions was constructed to identify causal links and the overall rationale of the two interventions; to test assumptions and test how much interventions planned within the programme are aligned with the WEE ToC. The approach focused on checking whether the ToC of the AWEE programme and FWW project were coherent with the overall SN ToC.
- Stakeholders were identified, to understand the roles of actors in the conception and delivery and to test how the relationships between implementers affect effectiveness of delivery. Table 2 provides details on the different stakeholder groups and the kind of information the team expected they would be able to provide.

**Table 2: List of stakeholders and kind of information**

Stakeholders	Leading theme of interview
UN Women staff (program manager. M&E officer)	Background information on programme and implementation, M&E results framework and organisational information, impact of federalism
National level (Key Informants- some at international level, government and implementing partners)	Independent feedback on relevance of the programme, relevance of initiatives within the programmes and the context
Municipality level (GESI focal point, Implementing partner staff and other relevant stakeholder representative such as private sector actors)	Perception on WEE as a concept, needs to address WEE constraints and opportunities at municipality level, level of awareness of UN Women programme, nature of collaboration and involvement between Implementing partners and UN Women management team
Beneficiaries in 2 municipalities per district	Feedback from women beneficiaries on relevance and outcome of involvement in AWEE and FWW; perceptions of men, women and youth on WEE? Challenges and opportunities, examples of good practice

- Consultation with primary stakeholders to triangulate validity of causal pathways and enhance usability of findings was organised. This was discussed during the inception workshop with representatives of the reference group and UN Women staff.
- The main project documents (Strategic notes, project reports and results documents) to were reviewed to assess whether there was enough documentary evidence to answer the evaluation questions. The absence of detailed baselines for example at the field level meant that a robust contribution analysis was not possible.

### 3.2 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation questions proposed in the ToR for this evaluation focused on the OECD- DAC (Development Assessment Committee) criteria for evaluation: relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The evaluation also considered HRGE and lessons learnt

- *Relevance:* The review of programme and project documents, and analysis of how the strategic notes and projects fit into the national constitutional, legal and policy framework formed a key part of the assessment process to ensure relevance a programme/project. This improved our understanding of the rationale behind the NCO's WEE programming.

- *Effectiveness*: To assess the progress against the expected outputs, the team conducted a review of project reports and findings of the AWEE mid-term review. Some Key Informants' Interviews (KIIs) with key stakeholders both from Kathmandu and projects districts, as well as beneficiaries were conducted to support the assessment.
- *Organizational Efficiency*: The evaluation focussed on evaluating how efficiently the NCO was able to implement the WEE programme of work and investigating the systems and procedures of the NCO and projects. This focussed on timeliness of actions, and whether at a programmatic level there are systems to plan, manage and monitor the project adequately, especially in the areas of partnership development, adapting learning and how has it impacted the projects delivery and stakeholders' engagement. This was assessed through stakeholder consultation and verified during interviews with the project participants.
- *Value for Money (VfM)*: In general terms value for money refers to assessment of how effectively the resources have been used. Based on VfM's principles<sup>2</sup> of maximizing the impact of every dollar spent to improve people's lives, three criteria such as economy, efficiency, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness were assessed as a part of assessment of organizational efficiency. The assessment focused on two guiding questions: (I) How have operational mechanisms affected implementation and results? It also includes cost-benefit analysis to compare total costs of activities with its benefit. (II) How resources are managed?

The evaluation also collected lessons learnt and assessed to what extent the WEE programme was designed and implemented following a human rights and gender equality approach using analysis of project/programme documents (See a document list in Annex 1) to investigate : the aspects of gender and HR; assess stakeholder participation in various phases of the implementation; assess monitoring practices with multiple levels of disaggregation of the participants; and, assess risks and challenges while doing all these at project, programme and organization level. In line with UN Women guidance<sup>3</sup> the evaluation assessed the extent to which the programming efforts are reaching the most vulnerable groups and addressing underlying structures and norms that perpetuate gender inequality.

In order to make the evaluation gender-responsive, the team ensured that women, but also youth were given space to express their voices through separate women-only and youth-only group discussions. The team also thrived to reach out to the most excluded women. During the analysis the power relationship between men and women was also considered as one of the key factors potentially limiting women' ability to fully benefit from the interventions.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.opml.co.uk/publications/assessing-value-for-money>  
[www.undp.org](#) › [dam](#) › [sudan](#) › [docs](#) › [DCPSF](#) › [Annex 9 VfM Principles](#)

<sup>3</sup> UN Women (2015) How to manage gender-responsive evaluation. Evaluation handbook, Independent evaluation office



### 3.3 Data collection and analysis methods

The evaluation used existing quantitative data available in various project/programme documents and the monitoring framework as well as collected some primary qualitative data. The first step for data collection was to review available project documentation and extract relevant data to answer the evaluation questions (as per the evaluation matrix). The document review highlighted that whilst there was data on outputs (activities achieved and delivered) there was limited data on outcomes (how much beneficiaries had expected concrete changes as a result of taking part to activities. This helped us to design semi structured questionnaires for primary data collection and provided.

The implementation and management of the WEE programme involves a number of different stakeholders. Stakeholders for this evaluation can be broadly classified into four groups each having a different interest and playing a different role in the implementation or the realisation of impact of the programme. Table 3 provides details of the stakeholders specifically in relation to the type of perspectives and information they provided for this evaluation. Primary stakeholders include women right holders at the municipality level, together with duty bearers (whether Municipality staff, elected representatives and project staff from CSOs delivering the various AWEE programme or FWW activities). They provided, perception from the field as well as data useful to validate and triangulate information collected at the national level. UN Women staff involved in the management of WEE were also considered as primary stakeholders: they are the primary audience of this evaluation and important actors in the design and implementation of the programme. At the national level, there are primary stakeholders such as the government and implementation partners and secondary stakeholders such as national or international development actors who are involved one way or another in advancing WEE and provided inputs on the relevance of UN Women's approach to WEE.

Since different stakeholders provided different information, the team developed semi structured questionnaires tailored for different stakeholders. Annex 3 presents the various tools the team used in the field. With KIIs the team conducted semi structured questionnaires. At municipality level the team conducted semi-structured group interviews

The team visited five districts and two municipalities per districts (see section 3.4 for a sampling approach Table 2) and conducted separate women, men and young people group interviews. Additionally, to the 18 Key Informant (KI) interviewed (including 9 women) in the districts, we also interviewed 20 KI (including 18 women), representatives of the Federal Government, UN women, IPs, CSOs, INGOs and the private sector in Kathmandu. Data has been codified and anonymised to respect confidentiality.

There were two-stages validation process; first, a debriefing meeting was organised with UN Women staff after the field work for preliminary validation. After the first draft a preliminary findings meeting was organized in December to correct factual errors, complete some gaps in the data and validate the findings; this involved UN Women and reference group members. At municipality level, field teams did their utmost to organise a short debriefing session with relevant municipality staff at the end of each visit.

### 3.4 Sampling design

The choice of districts and municipalities was finalised during the inception workshop. The districts were selected based on following criteria:

- The FWW project operates in two districts and the AWEE programme in six districts and the team aimed to select districts representative of the two interventions.
- A representation of geographic diversity: districts in the Terai and the Mid-Hills
- Scale of the intervention in terms of number of beneficiaries. Since there are only two districts in the FWW project, the proposal was to include both districts (Sindhupalchowk and Dhading) (Province 3), and for the AWEE programme, having considered the criteria for choice, three districts (Kavre, Banke, and Kailali) Provinces 3, 6 and 7 were selected. The list of sample districts per provinces are as below: Province 3- Sindupalchowk, Dhading, Kavre Province 6- Banke Province 7- Kailali. The choice of municipalities considered a good spread of representation of the 6 categories of women considered as excluded women by UN Women.

Based on the recommendations during the inception workshop, 10 sample municipalities were selected by primarily using two criteria: types of municipality (sub-metropolitan, municipality and rural municipality); and existence of various components of the AWEE programme or FWW project (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Snapshot of WEE Thematic Evaluation Field Visits and data collection tools**

Districts	Field Visit Area	Number of Interviews	Total
1. Dhading	Dhunibesi Municipality	FGDs WB and YM	2
		KII F Skills	1
		KII Ward Chair	1
	Thakre Rural Municipality	FGD WB, YF, MG	3
		KII Deputy Mayor	1
	Total		5 FGDs+ 3 KII
2. Kavre	Banepa Municipality	FGD WB, YF, YM	3
		KII Sabah Coordinator	1
		KII Deputy Mayor	1
	Panauti Municipality	FGD WB, MG	2
		KII Municipality officer	1
	Total		5 FGDs+ 3 KII
3. Sindhupalch owk	Chautara Municipality	FGD WB (F-skills and MAG), MG, RTI Champions	3
		KII MAG Social Mobiliser	1
		KII Women and Cooperative Officer, Municipality	1
	Helambu Rural Municipality	FGD WB (F-skills), YM, YF	3
		KII F-skills Social Mobilizer	1
	Total		6 FGDs+ 3 KII
4. Banke	Nepalgunj Sub- Metropolitan City	FGD WB (SABAH and Pourakhi), YF, YM	3
		KII SABAH field officer and Pourakhi Social Mobilizer	2
		KII Deputy Mayor and ward 10 elected member	1
	Kohalpur Municipality	FGD WB (SABAH), YM	2
		KII Deputy Mayor and Women and Children Officer	1
	Total		5 FGDs+ 4 KII
5. Kailali	Dhangadi Sub- Metropolitan City	FGD WB (SABAH, Pourakhi, TCN), YF, YM	3
		KII Pourakhi Social Mobilizer, TCN	2
		KII Mayor	1
	Godawari Municipality	FGD WB (SABAH and TCN), MG	3
		KII Pourakhi Social Mobilizer	1
KII Deputy Mayor + Ward no. 10 Chairperson		1	
	Total		6 FGDs+ 5 KII
<b>Total of people met in the field</b>			<b>27 FGDs + 18 KII (9 men and 9 women)</b>

Note: WB – Women Beneficiaries; YF – Youth (Female), YM – (Youth Male), MG – Mens’ Group

### 3.5 Ethics

The evaluation followed to the UNEG norms<sup>4</sup> and standards and the Ethical Guidelines for evaluations in the UN system. The process was participatory and integrated the aspects of human rights and gender equality as guided by the UN Evaluation Group.

This means that:

- The team ensured to the extent possible a fair representation of economic status, ethnic and caste diversity as well as gender and age representation interviews beneficiaries at municipality level.
- In order to enhance women's ability to talk freely they were interviewed separately from men, though did also interview men as the team values gender diversity of perspective.
- Though the team interviewed young people they were young adults rather than children.
- The team considered the possibility that interviewing women may generate some emotional distress but decided that on balance, WEE was as such not a controversial issue likely to generate distress or conflicts between community groups. However, the team tried its best to be respectful when probing around gender relations changes.
- Respondents did have the right to stop their participation at any time and at the start of the group discussions participants were asked for their verbal consent
- No personal identifiers were used in any form of reporting or dissemination. Personal identifications are linked with a unique identifier and kept securely. All information will remain anonymous and confidential, and no information was included in the report that could identify the respondent.
- The field team was very familiar with social and linguistic diversity in the visited municipalities. The field team collaborated with the implementing partners staff to invite participants to the discussions. Implementing partners were briefed beforehand about the necessity to select a fair representative sample of women beneficiaries and to organize timing of meetings at convenient time for the participants. The data collection period coincides with a peak in the agriculture season and thus interviews will be kept as brief as possible.

### 3.6 Limitations of the evaluation

Most districts in Nepal have been exposed in one way or another to development interventions over the last two decades. Gender and social inclusion, promoted by the government and development partners, have been a component of many projects. It was therefore always going to be difficult to find communities who have benefitted solely from the AWEE programme or the FWW project and have not benefitted from any other programmes. This also makes it difficult for beneficiaries themselves to distinguish between one intervention or another and to separate between various interventions. The baseline summary document<sup>5</sup> for AWEE presents an analysis of the context and the specific needs for women's economic empowerment. It does not include specific socio-economic data related to individual right holders or communities: hence this also makes a full attribution exercise impossible.

In Table 4 we have tried to find mitigations to most of the limitations.

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<sup>4</sup> UN Women (2015) How to manage gender-responsive evaluation. Evaluation handbook, Independent evaluation office page 56

<sup>5</sup> Baseline Assessment Summary February 2015

**Table 4: Limitation and mitigation measures**

<b>Limitation</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Research was conducted in diverse linguistic and cultural settings that sometimes required interpreters (in Kavre).	The research questions and protocols as well as certain necessary assignment documents were shared with researchers prior to engaging in the data collection. The field team was composed of team members who knew the local dialects.
The team was in the field during the fiscal year planning phase, explaining why local electives and bureaucrats in most places could not be interviewed as they were occupied with the planning.	The team collected phone numbers of relevant electives and bureaucrats for follow up phone interviews when possible (4 KII were contacted)
The overall time frame for the evaluation was shorter than what was initially designed and contracted for. This shortened the time for primary data collection	A pair of field evaluators (one Research assistant and her assistant) was added to the evaluation field team to enable data collection in parallel in different districts.
Due to the timing of the evaluation (July/August) which is the summer holiday period and the short time frame it was not possible to interview all the relevant primary stakeholders such as IPs.	The team used a snowballing technique to increase the coverage of KII amongst knowledgeable CSO actors involved in WEE. The relative similarity of opinions expressed by IP and CSO actors led the team to think that no major issues was left uncovered.
Some of the participants have benefitted from more than one programme component making it difficult to 1) pinpoint which component has had a specific impact but also 2) how far the aggregation of interventions may be more effective than having one intervention.	This is not an impact evaluation thus this is a small limitation; triangulating data from interviews – and interviewing a wide range of stakeholders, reviewing project reports and other information in the public domain (such as policy documents) gave us some sense of the likelihood of contribution.

# 4. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings under each of the evaluation questions. As per the ToRs each evaluation question has been addressed through sub-questions focussing of specific aspects of the overall evaluation question. An answer to each overall evaluation question is included in the conclusion paragraph at the end of each section. Suggestions for enhancing performance (as indicated in some of the evaluation questions) are discussed in the recommendation section (5).

## 4.1 How relevant has UN Women Nepal's WEE approach been in advancing gender equality in Nepal in the context of federalism and the 2015 Constitution?

### *4.1.1 To what extent the work on WEE addresses development and policy priorities of the Government of Nepal focusing on the needs of Nepali women and girls, at individual and collective level, especially of those sub-groups who are from marginalized and vulnerable groups?*

According to the World Economic Forum, the 2016 Global Gender Index ranks Nepal 110th out of 144 countries on gender parity<sup>6</sup>. The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender Inequality Index which measures reproductive health, empowerment and economic status, ranks Nepal 115th out of 188 countries for gender equality<sup>7</sup>. In addition, World Economic Forum ranks Nepal 110th out of 145 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index<sup>8</sup>. **These rankings clearly highlight that gender inequality is a major issue for the country and needs attention.**

Nepal, as a member of the United Nations and the international community, is a signatory of various conventions and instruments i.e., Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals (MDGs), ILO Convention 169, Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to name but a few. **As such the overall policy and legal framework for GESI is positive in Nepal** and the GoN has recognised GESI as an important issue in all of its periodic development plans, with an emphasis on special measures backed by proportional representation, positive discrimination and gender budgeting. It is also important to that SDG has taken LNOP as a mantra, with high priority.

**The Constitution of Nepal, 2015**, guarantees a right-based approach regarding gender equality and social inclusion. Article 18 of the Constitution stipulates a non-discrimination principle that reinforces the equality of all citizens before the law (GoN, 2015). Special provisions by law for the protection, empowerment or advancement of economically poor, socially or culturally backward women, Dalits, Adibasis, Adibasi Janajatis, Khas Aryas, Madhesis, Tharus, farmers, laborers, suppressed classes, Muslims, backward classes, minorities, marginalised, endangered communities, youth, children, the aged, gender-based and sexually oriented minorities and people with disabilities or citizens of

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<sup>6</sup> <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/economies/#economy=NPL>

<sup>7</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/NPL>

<sup>8</sup> <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/asia/nepal#1>

backward regions<sup>9</sup>. Article 38 guarantees Women the right to participate in all state mechanisms and to ‘have special opportunities’ for employment<sup>10</sup>. Dalits have specific rights for participation in all bodies of the State on the basis of proportional inclusion. There is no specific mention in the constitution on the right to economic empowerment of women.

**The 15th Plan (2019/20-2023/24) (Approach Paper)**, acknowledges that inequality and exclusion have not been eradicated, despite Rs. 135.51 billion allocated by the federal government during the 14<sup>th</sup> 3 Year Plan, to focus on human development. The strategy for long term vision mentions that criteria for socially progressive economic arrangements will be made to ensure women, Dalits, and other marginalized groups have all the required protection and rights. The plan aims to establish Nepal as a country with gender equality, thus aims to end all forms of violence, exploitation and discrimination and construct a child-friendly society. Gender equality and inclusion (GEI) is considered as a cross cutting area and there is a dedicated section on GEI. Under that section, gender-based violence has been recognised as an obstacle for equality and empowerment of women by the nation, thus various policies, plans and programmes are being implemented. The gender responsive budget allocation now stands at 38.6 per cent in FY 2019/20.

**Numerous GoN policies and guidelines** – including the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) (previously Local Development) GESI Policy, the Ministry of Urban Development GESI Operational Guidelines, the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation GESI Strategy, the Ministry of Education Consolidated Equity Strategy, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport GESI Operational Guidelines and the Ministry of Health GESI Operational Guidelines – recognise the need to address GESI issues programmatically and institutionally in order to achieve sector objectives. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) has introduced Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in the Fiscal Year 2007-08. All these sectoral GESI strategies and guidelines emphasise participation of women, Dalits, Adibasi/Janajatis, Madhesis, Muslims, persons with disabilities and excluded communities in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of sectoral policies, plans and programmes. They recognise the need to identify the specific barriers faced by women, the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded in the sector concerned. All these guidelines demand disaggregated data and evidence.

**This existing legal and policy framework at the national level provides a positive context to promote WEE** and UN Women’s objectives articulated in both the SN are aligned with the GoN’s policy on the matter. Yet, as reported by the Shadow Report Preparation Committee, ‘despite the legal guarantees for women rights and gender equality, practical implementation remains a major challenge [...] though some discriminatory provisions have been repealed, the de facto discrimination still prevails [...], there is a lack of disaggregated data and lack of information in the implementation status of the laws and policies<sup>11</sup>. There is also abundant literature available on gender discrimination and on how social and political processes in Nepal exclude women and maintain inequality<sup>12</sup>. Key Informants interviewed

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<sup>9</sup> Constitution of Nepal 2015, Article 18 (3) p 18

<sup>10</sup> Constitution of Nepal 2015, Article 38 (5) p 24

<sup>11</sup> SRPC 2018 Shadow report on 6<sup>th</sup> periodic report of CEDAW of Nepal p 3

<sup>12</sup> One comprehensive publication though a bit outdated identifies the major issues: ADB, 2010. Overview of gender equality and social inclusion in Nepal. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank.

also confirmed that 1) economic empowerment is a necessary condition for women's overall empowerment as it increases their bargaining power within the household and 2) social norms and the lack of skills and assets prevent women from accessing opportunities to develop economically. Interviews also confirmed that the lack of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge was a major constraint to economic empowerment. **It can therefore be argued that the NCO focus on WEE is needed and relevant.**

The WEE ToC is articulated around 3 axis: 1) need to change social norms, 2) development and implementation of macro-economic policies for economic empowerment of women and 3) the promotion of income generation activities promoting equality for women.

In the context of this evaluation the team did not have time to explore these 3 areas in detail especially in the case of the existing macro-economic policies. However general contextual knowledge of the social structures in Nepal confirm that **input on change in social norms is relevant** and needed to promote equality as these norms are the major constraints to gender equality and are systematically mentioned by women themselves.

Given the policy commitment to GESI in the last decade or so and the consideration and funding of GESI in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> plans, the gaps might be more in the area of implementation than in the lack of policies themselves. The lack of implementation would be to a great extent linked to the persisting social hierarchies (and the need to change social norms) and a focus on structural constraints to gender equality and to economic development more generally might be more relevant.

Developing income generation activities to support women equality is relevant as women beneficiaries and KII have confirmed that women lack opportunities. However, their comments also point towards a need to find markets for their products, which has not been addressed specifically in the ToC. It could be argued that this is included in the macro-economic policy pathway, however making it more explicit would make the need to focus on markets (developing markets and facilitating access to market for women) more visible and hence more likely to happen.

#### ***4.1.2 To what extent does UN Women's work on WEE address the challenges and opportunities of the transition to a federal system of governance in Nepal and how can this be further enhanced?***

Three rounds of local elections completed in 2017, helped bring more than 14,000 women into public office, including over 5,000 Dalit women<sup>13</sup>. This was the first local election in two decades and thus, the lack of prior experience in local governance across all newly elected officials, both men and women, is a significant challenge – and opportunity – in democracy building. Indeed, the recent provincial and federal elections, offer an historic context to address longstanding inequalities, including on gender and social exclusion<sup>14</sup>.

Many of these women (but men also) lack basic leadership and governance skills. Women are being elected as a part of proportional representation (quota requirement) to key positions but often they don't even know which party they represent, what their party stands for as they were put forward by relatives or party members<sup>15</sup>. They don't always know what their role is, have limited understanding

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<sup>13</sup> SN 2018-2022 p 1

<sup>14</sup> SN 2018-2022

<sup>15</sup> KII 1, 8, 17



of procedures especially around fiduciary risk and can easily be manipulated by unscrupulous colleagues, thus there is a strong need for capacity development of these elected women.

The evaluation field team also reported that, after the implementation of the federal structure, at the municipality level elected representatives are not always clear about their role in relation to GESI issues and whether it is a policy issue, a responsibility of a mayor or a deputy mayor or of an individual officer from the women development section/ social welfare section/ social unit in the municipal office.<sup>16</sup> This lack of clarity is probably partly due to issues around staff vacancies within the local administrative structures (See 4.4.2) but also to the limited capacity of many newly elected representatives.

Federalism is also an opportunity for provinces and municipalities as budgets have been decentralised and local authorities can spend the resources as they see fit. The women and children department of the Ministry at the district level has been dissolved and no other structure has yet been put in place at local level<sup>17</sup>. However, there is Ministry of Social Development at provincial level. Gender and social inclusion are not new within development interventions or development policies in Nepal and local representatives and administrative staff are very familiar with the terminology. However, what is understood by GESI and how gender sensitive and socially inclusive approaches are promoted is less clear and is very much left to chance and often limited to filling quotas imposed by legislation. One challenge to disseminate inclusion values at the community level is that many of the political leaders and administrative officers themselves are in the majority of men and social elite. Their ability to fully understand and act on discrimination and exclusion is coloured by their position of relative privilege. Whilst they may not be overtly resisting social change, they may not be fully aware of their biases and thus may not promote interventions which may challenge their own social status. Conceptual understanding around intersectionality is limited and is ignored in practice and interventions tend to target 'women' or 'Dalits' as homogeneous but separate groups<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, some key informants have mentioned that currently the focus of local authorities is to invest in infrastructures with the result that socio-economic issues are neglected<sup>19</sup>. This is why working closely with the local level to promote gender equality is even more important now and thus the information and awareness campaigns organised through the NCO WEE programming are necessary and important. This is also where focusing on the capacity building of leadership of newly elected representatives through AWEE was relevant.

## 4.2 How effective UN Women contributions have been in progress towards achievement of results defined in country strategic notes of 2014-17 and 2018-22?

UN Women's programmatic WEE work is informed by two SNs; the first one covering 2014-2017 and the second one covering the period of 2018-2022. To implement the SN, each year the NCO prepares

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<sup>16</sup> CS1

<sup>17</sup> KII 14

<sup>18</sup> Nepal Climate Change Support programme Phase 2 (2019) : Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy, Kathmandu

<sup>19</sup> KII 1, 4, 17

an annual work plan with a cover note providing a brief background and narratives of the work plan. This note follows a similar format each year, provides update on the context, the proposed programme, the management of operations, M&E and resource mobilisation and mirrors sections in the SN. WEE is one thematic area of intervention<sup>20</sup> and is implemented in collaboration with the federal government, CSOs and other UN agencies and development partners.

NCO WEE programming has 3 expected outputs (as defined in the ToC of the Strategic note (2018–2022), for further detail please see on page 8.

#### ***4.2.1 What is the progress towards intended results (normative, operational and coordination) on WEE and how has UN Women contributed to these?***

This section focuses on normative and operational results. Normative is understood as work which influences changes in rules of the game and operational activities which help satisfy practical needs of target group. The division between the two can be arbitrary as some practical activities may lead to changes in norms for example.

**Progress in normative work has been slower than expected** as it is highly contingent on collaboration with the government (see 4.4.2). The NCO annual report<sup>21</sup> reported ‘work on policy review and advocacy for gender responsive macro-economic policy and sectoral policies have been delayed due to the emerging needs for observing and identifying the Government’s new/refined priorities in the context of the federalism governance structure’. Similarly, the Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF) for WEE in 2018, reports ‘no progress’ in 2017 and 2018 on Indicator 2.1a: Number of gender responsive economic policies/strategies/actions plans/guidelines adopted/amended in line with CEDAW recommendations. It seems from the PMF that most progress at the policy level was achieved before 2016. KII have confirmed that limited progress has been made because of the transition period. However, UN Women supported the production of CEDAW 6<sup>th</sup> Shadow report.<sup>22</sup>

For example, the recommendations of amendment to the foreign employment Act submitted by UN Women in 2017 have not yet led to an outcome as the Government’s endorsement of the amendment has been pending.

The AWEE programme has been effective in mobilising citizens to increase women’s awareness of their right and strengthen their ability to raise their voices. A total of seven excluded women from six networks of HBW, rural women, conflict-affected women and RWMWs won as a “Vice Chair” and “Ward Members” of several rural/municipalities. This figure represents 25 per cent of the women from six networks who ran as candidates for ward chair, vice chair and ward member in the local elections. The elected women are now strategically positioned to influence decision-making processes at the local level. Their political representation will ultimately contribute to achieve the larger goal of gender equality and women’s empowerment in Nepal, particularly in the political sector. UN Women

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<sup>20</sup> as defined in the SN of 2014-2017 p7 and SN 2018-2022

<sup>21</sup> 2018: p 63

<sup>22</sup> <http://fwld.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Shadow-Report-on-Sixth-Periodic-Report-of-Nepal-on-CEDAW-2018.pdf>

*‘Sangachokgadi Municipality, one of the local level governments in Sindhupalchowk district, allocated NPR 3,300,000 (USD 29,000) for the empowerment of women and children in the municipality. The fund is being mobilised for skills development training to promote women entrepreneurship, providing information and skills training to women seeking foreign employment to ensure safer migration and psychosocial counselling.’*

Source: FWW Annual report 2018-2019 p 4

partnered with a consortium of six networks of excluded women to make this development possible, developing leadership capacity and knowledge of excluded women, psychosocially preparing them as local women leaders and facilitating the building of coalitions among them<sup>23</sup>.

There was a successful advocacy campaign, “Sahi Ho!,” under which five policy dialogues were held in 2018. Through the advocacy campaign, more than 10,760 members of communities including community leaders, men and boys, adolescents, youth and federal and local decision-makers were reached through various community-based and national level activities<sup>24</sup>. The training on the Right to Information (under FWW project) also encouraged women in approaching their municipality office to claim their rights (38 women lodged an application since their training)<sup>25</sup>.

However, women beneficiaries interviewed across most of the municipalities visited report that their municipality is not transparent, that despite their raised awareness of their own rights it remains difficult to navigate the administrative hierarchy<sup>26</sup>. This means that work to remove the constraints need to continue. Some municipalities’ authorities are taking up WEE and

GESI issues seriously and are starting to set aside GESI related budgets. The field visits show that municipalities level of investment and activities in GESI plans differ widely with some municipalities having no plans and others having plans and budget but no spending, confirming that GESI policy is not yet implemented in a consistent way across the districts<sup>27</sup>.

The Performance Monitoring Framework for the AWEE programme in 2018, also reports that ‘six excluded women’s networks secured their representation (through 124 individual members out of 180 trained under the AWEE programme) in various local decision- making and coordination forums in six districts’. This networking resulted in a charter of demands submitted to the authorities.

The AWEE’s donor’s report mentioned about six networks of excluded women who were able to raise resources from the local governance.

**Operationally, the work with women on the ground has shown progress.**

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<sup>23</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> donor report to Government of Finland

<sup>24</sup> See SAHI HO

<sup>25</sup> KII 6

<sup>26</sup> FDG SC1, BK1, DK1, KG1

<sup>27</sup> The Nepal Country Office Strategic Note and Annual Work Plan – Outcome Area 2 (Project ID: 94480), Fourth Unofficial Progress Report to the Government of Finland, January-December 2018, p 6; see also KP3, SC5, BN6, KG4.

UN Women aims to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through social norm change and achievement of substantive equality – equality of opportunity, access and results - across its WEE programme interventions.

In order to realize the substantive equality through WEE, NCO has adopted a holistic approach to women's economic empowerment programmes. The holistic approach aims to leverage economic competency and income generation capacity of women to achieve a broader scope of women's empowerment such as their leadership, voice and choice in both private and public domains. Thus, a comprehensive support package combining vocational skills, along with awareness raising and knowledge building support on GESI as well as leadership development and psycho-social support for the development of relevant life skills, is crucial. The combined support resulted in enhanced self-confidence and sense of economic autonomy among the women, especially those who started income generation.

In the three years since 2016, UN Women reported (but has not been validated by the evaluation team) that 2,736 women and girls (2136 from AWEE and 600 from FWW), from excluded groups in eight districts have strengthened their earning capacities, expanded their capital sources, market networks and linkages and accessed economic empowerment opportunities and services. Out of them, 1,512 (1098 from AWEE and 414 from FWW) i.e 55.26% women now generate income and contribute to household resources through engagement in micro-scale production, start-up/development of micro- scale businesses, and paid-employment. They now earn an average monthly income of NPR 5,858 (USD 51.84)<sup>28</sup>. This was possible through an integrated approach of vocational skills upgrade (in various sectors such as tailoring or beauty salons for example or non-traditional professions such as e-rickshaw drivers), business skills development with support to access finances and psychosocial support complemented with information dissemination activities (such as exposure to the right to information act).

Despite these positive results women interviewed by the evaluation team across all the different activities all commented that they continue to face challenges to scale up their activity and income. Women's most burning issue (besides the weight of their domestic responsibilities) is around access to market, especially for rural women<sup>29</sup>. This means access to market to sell their products but also access to opportunities along the supply chain. For example, women contractors are excluded from certain markets because they never have enough investment or the right equipment to comply to specification of procurement regulation or their lack of connections with building companies<sup>30</sup>. In one focus group women commented that too many of them had been trained in knitting resulting in competition between women<sup>31</sup>. Similarly, someone commented that in the Dhangari area there are already a lot of rickshaws making it difficult for new comers or that cheaper Chinese goods were in competition<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> idem p 8

<sup>29</sup> FDG BK1, KII 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14

<sup>30</sup> KII 2

<sup>31</sup> FDG SC1

<sup>32</sup> KII KD4

The E-Rickshaw project<sup>33</sup>, implemented under the AWEE programme, where 64 returnee migrant women were provided training to drive a rickshaw as well as financial support to purchase a vehicle and start running a business, is hailed as an innovative successful approach by UN Women because it combines capacity building with facilitating access to start the business. But it also provides an opportunity for women to venture into traditionally male dominated activities. Out of 50 women who attempted the driving test, 39 women passed both written and trials tests. Out of 39 women, 36 are now working as e-rickshaw drivers and seeing real economic benefits. The remaining three could not drive the e-rickshaw as their family did not agree for them to start an e-rickshaw business. Discussions in the field confirmed that transforming training into a successful rickshaw business is a challenge: passing the test is the first hurdle, and despite financial support it is a heavy financial risk. In one of the districts visited, out of the three trainees who passed the driving test, one of the rickshaws is now driven by the trainee’s husband and one trainee has returned abroad. After the training, wife started earning and her household economic condition improved so as the relationship with the husband and the children. The husband and children started showing more respect. The husband also learned to drive the e-richshaw from the wife and started driving during her sick and monthly period. The neighbours and relatives became positive and supportive. The AWEE programme annual report also indicates that three of the women who successfully passed their test were not able to purchase a rickshaw because of family resistance<sup>34</sup>.

*‘A major change in women in all walks of life is that they have a sense of purpose and a determination to make their identity and move forth in life’*

Men’s group BN3

**Box 3: Sample of answers made by women to ‘what changes in your life have you seen?’**

- We are confident enough to train others.
- We can interact with the new faces without any hesitations.
- We have built up the trust from our family members: we get positive response not only from our work but also from neighbours and relatives.
- We are economically independent now.
- We are more aware of social issues
- I can go out and work for myself

Source FDG KB1

However, besides the welcomed highly needed increased income, there is ample evidence that women who have been supported by UN Women have improved their self-confidence through participation in income generation activities, local politics and leadership in community and governance affairs. This is reported in AWEE programme and FWW project documentation and is confirmed by the women beneficiaries group discussions held by the evaluation team. Especially in the Terai municipalities of Nepalgunj and Dhangadi, women have reported (and this was confirmed

<sup>33</sup> Pourakhi 2018: Electric Rickshaw (e- rickshaw) Services by Excluded Women for Women Third report progress December 2017- March 2018.

<sup>34</sup> The Nepal Country Office Strategic Note and Annual Work Plan – Outcome Area 2 (Project ID: 94480), Fourth Unofficial Progress Report to the Government of Finland, January-December 2018, p 13

by men focus groups) that they feel more confident to come out of purdah<sup>35</sup> but also to speak in public and express their views on public affairs<sup>36</sup>. The leadership training given to the women (few of whom are now elected) also must have garnered some fruitful results which need to be further elaborated under the findings. In Banepa, women also reported important changes in their lives. (See Box 3).

The general view of young women interviewed also reflects some encouraging signs of positive change though not only attributable to the AWEE programme or the FWW project. For them, WEE is a good thing as it allows women to be more independent and contribute more to the family well-being. Women see that relationships between mothers-in-law and wives are shifting towards more respect and feel inspired by women entering traditionally male dominated field such as drivers, the army or the police. The presence of women in politics and the administration is also inspiring. Even though some say many elected women remain a proxy for their husbands, they see this as the first step towards political empowerment. They also say that women are less likely to tolerate violence though it is not clear whether this is a result specific to AWEE or to development interventions in general<sup>37</sup>.

Similarly, groups of young men interviewed reflected that WEE was beneficial for the family<sup>38</sup>, not just for the additional income but also to ease tensions within the households as often finances become a source of conflict between family members<sup>39</sup>. It also provides women with more autonomy and self-confidence. One young adult commented that having had a working mother made it normal for him to have a working wife, showing the potency of role models to change attitudes<sup>40</sup>.

**On the coordination** level, the SN 2018-2022<sup>41</sup> recognises that fulfilling the coordination mandate is a challenge as there are a limited number of UN agencies connected to the GEWE mechanism. The NCO contributed to this objective in line with its continuing roles as co-chair of the Gender Theme Group (GTG), UNDAF Outcome 4 Working Group and Harmful Practices Working Group and its substantive leadership on GEWE in numerous collaborative efforts of UN agencies, including inter-agency and inter-working group dialogues and cooperation<sup>42</sup>. In 2020, the NCO will use its convening and coordination role as co-chair of the UNCT GTG (with UNDP), the Harmful Practices Working Group (WG) (with UNFPA), and the UNDAF Outcome 4 WG (with UNDP), to mobilize the UNCT<sup>43</sup>. The NCO will also strengthen interagency coordination mechanisms to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) with the UNCT PSEA Taskforce (co-chaired with UNRCO), in line with global guidelines. In its role as co-chair of the International Development Partners' Group's (IDPG) GESI WG (with EoF and USAID), NCO will place emphasis on advancing GEWE and SI in the federal context.

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<sup>35</sup> Purdah: Purdah is the practice that includes the seclusion of women from public observation. It could be by wearing concealing clothing or by erecting high walls and curtains.

<sup>36</sup> FDG SH3, BN2, KD2

<sup>37</sup> FDG SH3, BN2, KD2

<sup>38</sup> FGD BK2, KB3, KD3, SH2

<sup>39</sup> FGD KD3

<sup>40</sup> FGD KB3

<sup>41</sup> p 6

<sup>42</sup> Quarterly Report

<sup>43</sup> AWO 2020

#### ***4.2.2 What has been the contribution of WEE programme to facilitate enabling macro-economic and sectoral policy environment in Nepal that prioritizes women's economic empowerment?***

As explained in the limitations section, assessing the level of the contribution of the NCO's WEE programme to macro-economic and sectoral policy environment is challenging for a number of reasons.

**Methodologically such a robust assessment would require the possibility to isolate WEE interventions from other donors' interventions** which is not possible. It is even more complex given the fact that UN Women collaborate with a number of other donors on gender related issues. UN Women co-chairs the development partners' GESI working group and as such could perhaps have more visibility and influence.

**There is also a lack of appropriate data available to draw conclusions about contribution** on two levels:

1. To assess the level of influence or cause and effect relationships between inputs in policy dialogues and specific policy outcomes, would require careful micro monitoring, with reviews of meeting minutes and interviews of involved actors. For example, when the 2018 PMF WEE annual report mentions that 'Out of the 180 excluded women leaders trained through the AWEE programme, 109 women secured the membership of local political parties to continue their advocacy and political participation' it is implied that this is as a result of the AWEE programme. However, unless there are monitoring data available to support this implied link (for example intention interviews of women participants before the training and after gathering data on their interest in joining public office), only a correlation comment can be made. We know for example that many women have entered politics pushed by their husbands and have limited knowledge of what their party stands for<sup>44</sup>. This is not to belittle AWEE's outcomes, but it is important to recognise the importance of the robustness of evidence.
2. To assess the relationship between policy changes and macro-economic outcomes also requires quantitative analysis of data sets at the national level which are not yet available.

**Additionally, there is an operational gap:** within the AWEE programme and FWW project most of the interventions to support economic development are focused on the micro level (as already discussed work at normative level has slowed down): support is provided to individual women or small groups. Though some of the activities (such as campaigns for awareness amongst policy makers organised within the Sahi ho! project) target decision makers at different levels of governance, the causal link between micro-level interventions and broader macro-picture outcomes is not immediately apparent. At the programmatic conceptual level, the pathways of change within the ToC are not sufficiently detailed to be able to make that link (See discussion under 4.3.2). This is also illustrated by the case of women reporting feeling empowered by new information about their rights (as a result of the RTI

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<sup>44</sup> KII, 1, 2, 14

campaign under FWW) but who struggle to get access to information because there is administrative and bureaucratic resistance<sup>45</sup>. Positive outcomes for individuals do not immediately or necessarily translate into the removal of structural constraints.

The component of the WEE programme specifically focused on advancing macro-economic issues which included involving feminist economists to advise the National Planning Commission was one of the activities which did not happen due to the repeated turnover of the NPC leadership. The second option to develop partnership with Tribhuvan University was aborted in 2017 though new discussions are currently being conducted<sup>46</sup>.

Despite the difficulty to answer this question with great confidence there is no disputing that the integrated approach promoted by the two SNs of 2014-2017 and 2018-2022 is directly attempting to tackle relevant barriers to WEE. The AWP between 2015 and 2019 demonstrate the commitment of UN Women in the last 5 years to address barriers around WEE in an integrative manner at all levels. The lack of evidence at this point of macro-economic impact is probably a combination of factors such as the instability in the political context, the scale of the intervention and the lack of data.

#### ***4.2.3 What are enabling and limiting factors that affected the achievement of results? And what actions need to be taken to overcome any barriers that limit progress?***

This question on enabling and limiting factors was considered at three levels: the policy, programmatic and right holders levels. According to the ToC, the work delivered under AWEE programme and FWW project should deliver outcomes at the enabling environment levels as well as improving livelihoods conditions for women.

##### **Policy level**

###### *Limiting factors*

As we discuss below (4.4.2) **the Nepali political and policy making contexts** offer both enabling and limiting factors for normative progress. The policy context is favourable to GESI progress but implementing progressive legislation is proving to be a challenge at the moment. Since policy change depends on collaboration with decision makers, UN Women's influence is largely dependent on a conducive political climate.

##### **Programmatic level**

###### *Enabling factors*

**From a programmatic perspective**, the integrated approach of a diversity of activities within the AWEE and FWW packages (see Boxes 1 and 2) is potentially an enabler as these interventions address the multiple barriers women face and there is potential for synergies between these interventions. Output

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<sup>45</sup> FDG WB, BK1, KD1, KG1, SC1

<sup>46</sup> AWEE Annex 1: Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF) 2018



2.2 'Networks of excluded women [returnee women migrant workers, HIV positive women and home-based workers] have skills and enterprise development assistance for sustainable is consistent with a multi-pronged approach to WEE which recognises the needs of excluded women for more skills but in themselves these efforts to develop entrepreneurship do not logically link up to a more conducive policy context. This is also where a lot of the programme input has been used as many of the AWEE and FWW activities have focused on developing skills and entrepreneurship with the aim of skilling women rather than changing policy.

### *Limiting factors*

During the field visits the evaluation team asked women to list what they perceived their main challenges to economic empowerment to be and to roughly rank them allocating a maximum number of points across all the challenges named. Whilst each group listed over ten challenges the common ones and the ones systematically getting more points were societal attitude and family responsibilities. Gender social norms in Nepal are very rigid and roles and responsibilities of men and women well defined. Women are the main carers and they need to fulfil their domestic duties before they can do anything else. Women's movements outside the home and their behaviour in public are also highly controlled and any deviation from the rule is viewed negatively by society and family as her behaviour reflects badly on the family honour and standing. Additionally, lack of education (linked to lack of self-esteem), weak economic status, lack of skills/advanced training and lack of capital/difficulties to repay loans were commonly identified challenges. As the activities offered by the AWEE programme and FWW project, attempt to address these needs arguably the diversity of interventions is a positive aspect of the WEE programme.

However, the lack of explicit connection between the different activities, the relatively large number of partners delivering their part of the programme at different times and across a number of districts reduces the potential offered by a holistic approach. Though WEE is conceptualised as a set of complementary activities addressing different challenges, the implementation process of the AWEE programme and FWW project tends to result in a series of distinct activities.

The felt disconnect can be explained at two levels:

#### **At the design level, the logic between activities, outputs and outcome could be strengthened.**

Outcome 2.1 is described as 'Policies to advance women's economic empowerment and sustainable development are developed and implemented' which would indicate a focus on normative work as policy development. Indicators 2.1 and 2.2 for Outcome 2.1 and indicators 2.1.1 a, 2.1.1.b and 2.1.1c for Output 2.1.1 confirm a cause and effect a logic since these indicators refer to policies drafted or submitted or endorsed in areas relevant to GESI and WEE. Output 2.1.3 is focused on increasing the capacity and opportunity of networks to influence local and national decision-making processes for sustainable development and output 2.1.4 focuses on gathering evidence to support policy advocacy. These outputs seem relevant as they all support in one way or another work at policy level, whether it is direct advocacy or building capacity for advocacy.

It is however less clear how there is an unspoken assumption that women who are skilled and more aware of their rights may exert pressure on duty bearers, but this is perhaps where the disconnect between activities becomes an issue.

**At the implementation level, some of the partners interviewed reported working in isolation from each other** with limited knowledge of each other's activities, even when working in the same district<sup>47</sup>, though it seems under the FWW project, there were more connections between project activities: MAG and F-Skill worked in the same location with some of the same participants. F-Skill also worked with some of the participants to Pourakhi's interventions. Similarly, there is different levels of engagement of the IPs and the municipalities. During the field visit some key informants (ward chairs) claimed having not been informed at all, some not informed but still aware of the project, some briefly informed, some informed and one being 'very involved'<sup>48</sup>. Only one municipality informant explained how the municipality, as a follow up to a skills training delivered by one IP, offered support to trainees in obtaining licences for E-Rikshaw<sup>49</sup>.

When there have been opportunities for multi-partner meetings organised by UN Women, these have mostly been an opportunity for UN Women to inform partners about processes and procedures rather than opportunities for joint planning, or sharing lessons learnt. Because of procurement and contracting issues some activities which could have been concomitant to increase synergies end up disjointed.

Partners have also unanimously commented that the funded activities have been too short, planned as one-off interventions with no follow up<sup>50</sup>. Follow up is needed to consolidate the learning, but also to check the longer-term effects of training or awareness raising: What happens to the trainees? What do they do with the new skills or information? Vulnerable women by definition need more investment and this would include approaches tailored at various levels of vulnerability. Some women may need more longer short-term input and coaching; others may do better in smaller groups or responds better to peer support where one woman with more skills and experiences supports others.

Another aspect possibly reducing effectiveness is the spread of the interventions across a number of districts and different target populations. Whilst our evaluation did not focus on this aspect, and additional interviews with implementing partners would be useful, we found that partners interviewed were not too clear about the strategic dimension of the choices of location. The FWW project is targeted at earth quake affected districts where there is also a high number of incidences of trafficking and the focus of the FWW project is on survivors of trafficking, thus there is some logic. For the AWEE programme, there are 6 districts spread over 3 provinces. The choice of locations was based on the pre-existence of networks of women from these excluded categories as this would ensure a good level of local presence of these targeted women within the district. However even within excluded women groups there are different degree of exclusion and different factors which affect participation (such as the distance from the place of training for example). Whilst AWEE made a

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<sup>47</sup> KII 6, 8,9, 11, 12, 14

<sup>48</sup> KG4, SC5, KP3, KD6, BK3, BN6 and KB5

<sup>49</sup> KB3

<sup>50</sup> KII 8, 9, 11,12

deliberate attempt to increase inclusiveness by targeting these networks, in practice we did not find conclusive evidence of how much efforts were made by service providers to reach out to the most difficult to reach. Reaching out to the most excluded requires more resources and thus AWEE's strategy for a large coverage may have been too ambitious.

## Beneficiaries' level

### Enabling factors

The field team collected a number of good practice examples which positively contributed towards achieving gender equality:

*'Health, education and income are the three things women mention again and again when you go to the field. Thus, any intervention on WEE is relevant however many programs focus too narrowly on income generating activities or training without addressing the social constraints. Women remain focus on the home and the farm and will only venture further if these tasks/responsibilities are taken care of'.*

KII 2

Source KII 2

- The e-rickshaw initiative was inspiring because it introduced women to a set of non-traditional skills and helps create a vision, especially for young women about what is possible. One of the reasons women are likely to name tailoring or beauty parlours as their preferred business option is because they do not have ideas of what would be possible due to a lack of exposure and role models. Thus, exposing women to new options helps to project themselves in different situation. It also helps to change social norms: 1) others can see that women are able to take on new challenges and 2) playing different public roles does not necessarily equate to deprecation, as it is often argued by traditional views.
- The level of support provided by the local government to new E rickshaw drivers in some places contributed in scaling up the project benefits. Where support was provided to for example formalise the business through licencing was encouraging for women who tend to stumble at this first bureaucratic hurdle. This emphasises the need for more connection between skills development projects and the local bureaucracy.
- Employing local women as part of project staff worked well to motivate local women beneficiaries: it made dissemination of information about the programme easier. The local psychosocial counsellor knew the local context and the beneficiaries in person; thus, they are better equipped to address their personal issues. This acknowledgement contributed towards increased motivation, thus to some extent helping the project deliver better results.
- The Champion model adopted as part of the Right to information training (FWW) was also an interesting approach. The RTI Champions selected for the delivery were already engaged in leadership and other social works. This increased their sense of project ownership. The Champions also acted as a bridge between the beneficiaries and the local authority in helping the beneficiaries to reach out to the local government and officers and claim their rights. Since the champions were recruited locally, they also brought with them a knowledge of their

community. They were also able to adapt the RTI trainings to some extent to the local conditions.

### *Limiting factors*

As already discussed, women's ability to take part and develop themselves depend to a large extent on their family's willingness to grant women the right to explore possibilities outside the home. A woman's level of education, her previous exposure to similar opportunities, her socio-economic background (despite being categorised as an excluded woman) the presence of IPs in the vicinity, are all factors which combined together enable women to take opportunities and develop. Women also face a number of structural challenges to empowerment and equality which also affect their ability to take part to activities or benefit from them (see 4.2.1 and 4.4.1). Women face hurdles to take part to trainings and when they do manage to complete the training, their personal life situation and family/social context are often the next hurdles.

The difficulty to access finances for investment is a real constraint<sup>51</sup>. F-Skill's progress report of June 2019 reports slow willingness to take loans and that 'by mid-June 2019, only 49 out of 410 project participants who are involved in income generation applied for loan from local cooperatives'<sup>52</sup>. Interventions have increasingly tried to address as in the case of the E-rikshaw or by providing seed money to purchase equipment (like sewing machine<sup>53</sup>). However, struggles to access finance remain both a consequence and a cause of deep gender equality as women do not own collaterals to generate trust from financial institutions and lack knowledge about loan processes.

Suggestions for overcoming hurdles are considered in the recommendations section (5)

## **4.3 How the organizational efficiency contributed in progress towards the achievement of results defined in 2014-17 and 2018-22 strategic plans.**

### ***4.3.1 How have operational mechanisms (procedures, management arrangements, etc.) affected implementation and results of WEE programming and what changes could make UN Women Nepal's approach to WEE more efficient and effective?***

UN Women have adequate operational mechanisms to support the implementation of WEE programming. Strategic Notes, Annual Work Plan and Development Results Framework and Organizational Efficiency & Effectiveness Framework (DRF and OEEF) are available as planning documents and these are adaptive and provide the flexibility to refocus and strategize emerging priorities drawing on prior experience, evidence, and consultation with national stakeholders. For example, after the devastating April 2015 earthquake, NCO revised the programme incorporating

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<sup>51</sup> FGD BN1, KII 2, 3, 7, 12, 13

<sup>52</sup> FSKILLS 2019. Provision of training to returnee women migrant workers and survivors of trafficking on vocational skills and entrepreneurship development in Sindhupalchok and Dhading districts Reference No: UNW-NPL-RFP-2017-002

<sup>53</sup> KII 1

additional component to respond to urgent humanitarian and early recovery imperatives<sup>54</sup>. DRF and OEEF elucidate year-wise resource allocation with clear milestone and target. Also, the intervention level budget was allocated by outcomes, outputs, and activities following a good practice of estimating expenditure for each major programme component<sup>55</sup>. Spend of each intervention includes all costs directly incurred through the implementation of the activities and management support<sup>56</sup>. However, the absence of cumulative cost spent to achieve outputs and outcomes did not allow reasonable efficiency calculation. There were no major implementation delays except few weeks' impediment due to farming season and festivals.<sup>57</sup>

Parity across the entire UN System "well before 2030" is a top priority<sup>58</sup>, UN Women NCO already achieved 59%<sup>59</sup> of female staff in its team. A team of national (86%) and international staff enabled to enhance stakeholder engagement and provided the required support to implementing partners. To ensure compliance with financial regulations and policies, implementation processes were regularly reviewed, and orientation sessions on audit requirements, asset management, and procurement were provided to staff and partners. However, information of how the resources were leveraged and what internal cost controls mechanism were used to achieve economy could not be accessed.

The risk register including mitigation action were maintained at the NCO level. For example, political uncertainty or instability was included as one of the risks for which mitigation action was mentioned as "The Country Office will mitigate the risk by regularly monitoring the situation, by reviewing and selecting alternative implementation plans and re-allocating resources, in line with joint International Development Partner's Group (IDPG) and UN positions.", however, this risk persisted causing delay and or hindrances in achieving results. FWW Annual Report, 2019 mentions that recommendations to the amendment of the Foreign Employment Act were submitted to the Government, but the approval of the amendment is pending due to other political priorities of the Government in relation to the introduction of the new federal government systems.

Periodic progress report to the donor (such as annual reports) complemented by updates on performance management framework are helpful to understand the progress towards the targets of key indicators. A scrutiny of reports however shows that there can be a discrepancy between achieved outputs and non-achieved outcomes. For example, when comparing the results with targets of FWW and AWEE, targets of all key output indicators were achieved or exceeded but targets of outcomes were only partly met.

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<sup>54</sup> Nepal CO SN-AWP Addendum 2015

<sup>55</sup> Guidelines to the DCED Standard for Results Measurement: Tracking Costs and Impact

<sup>56</sup> Interim Financial Report, FWW, February 2018

<sup>57</sup> KII interview (partner CSO)

<sup>58</sup> Gender Parity Strategy, October 2017

<sup>59</sup> Addendum NCO HR, July 2018

Cost-benefit analysis (CBA)<sup>60</sup>: It is a technique used to compare the total costs of an activity with its benefits, using a common metric of monetary units. This enables the calculation of the net cost or benefit associated with the activity. CBA adds up the total costs of an activity and compares it against net present value of its benefits. This tool is used for assessing the efficiency of certain activities. Two activities, one each from FWW and AWEE programme are used for CBA.

Cost benefit analysis: FWW-Activity 2.1.1 [Provide sustainable livelihoods opportunities to targeted women through skill development training, including financial literacy, followed by job placement and start-up support to small-scale entrepreneurs]

FWW allotted USD 360,000 to provide sustainable livelihoods opportunities to 600 women, out of them, 410 women increased monthly income by USD 27.98 to 84.32.

For benefit-cost analysis, it's assumed that all the allotted cost was spent. The inflation rate of 4.15%<sup>61</sup> is factored into the net present value of income had these women continued to earn the same amount for 3 years.

Budget	USD 360,000	
Cumulative income with net present value (Year 1 to Year 3)	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
	USD 396,747	USD1,195,631
Benefit/cost ratio	1.1	3.3

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<sup>60</sup> <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/CostBenefitAnalysis>

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/422594/inflation-rate-in-nepal/>

This activity possesses a positive benefit/cost ratio which means benefit outweighs the investment, however women have to continue the income generating activity for at least three years with monthly income of no less than USD 27.98.

Cost benefit analysis: AWEE- Activity 2.1.2.5 [Support training on entrepreneurship and vocational skills development including training on planning, management and financial literacy in collaboration with a Government Training Institute]

AWEE budgeted USD 1,166,740 to support training on entrepreneurship and vocational skills development including training on planning, management and financial literacy. Out of 1,840 trained women, a total of 713 earned an average monthly income of USD 53 through micro-scale home-based production, start-up of micro businesses and paid/wage employments.

For benefit-cost analysis, it's considered that all the cost allocated for this activity was spent. The inflation rate of 4.15%<sup>62</sup> is factored into the net present value of income had these women continued to earn the same amount for 3 years.

Budget	USD 1,166,740
Cumulative income with net present value (Year 1 to Year 3)	USD 1,254,841
Benefit/cost ratio	1.12

This activity also possesses a positive benefit/cost ratio which means benefit outweighs the investment, however, women have to continue the said activity for at least three years with minimum income of USD 53 per month.

Though **operational mechanisms were supportive of implementation**, outcome results were compromised mainly because of the external reasons such as the current transition context. This risk was already envisioned and registered but still remained causing repercussion on programme delivery- the mitigation action was not influential enough to avert this risk.

The availability of appropriate data is essential to measure economy and efficiency with more confidence. To ensure the effectiveness of the investment, programme should work towards sustaining the results. For example, to acquire return on investment, women who were involved in income generating activities after the training should continue the business and generate income for at least 3 years. This increases the need to strengthen the trainee selection and training selection criteria taking into consideration the aptitude of prospective participants and market demand and supply as well as linking them with local Government to access required resource after the programme phases out.

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<sup>62</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/422594/inflation-rate-in-nepal/>

#### ***4.3.2 How can the programme monitoring and evaluation systems strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme implementation?***

The WEE programme follows the standard M&E good practice and has a results framework with indicators reported on by UN Women as part of the NCO annual working plan reporting. Each service provider is also required to submit activity reports on a regular basis. This information is readily available.

The M&E system could improve the effectiveness of the programme if it was more lessons learnt focused rather than results focused as it is at the moment<sup>63</sup>. The reports are focused on progress in delivering activities rather than the outcomes of these activities or change. In the results framework it is possible to trace whether WEE achieved its targets in terms of number of women trained, number of policy dialogues held, networks formed or micro projects supported. There is limited information about how these activities have resulted in women's increased economic well-being (apart an average monthly income for the women beneficiaries). For example, the Annex A PMF of WEE 2018 mentions that 'Out of 1,840 excluded women, 713 are now generating income, utilizing their skills, 440 were supported for business start-up support and 514 took the national skill testing by the National Skill Testing Board (NSTB) with the support from the AWEE programme. In addition, 29 excluded women secured jobs through job placement support'. This progress report is completed by a narrative report to donors which provides additional details (such as women now earn an average of 6,000 NRS per month).

What would be useful for learning at programmatic level is to include an analysis of what happened to the 1,133 women (61 %) who did undergo the training but were not able to generate additional income. Do we know the characteristics of the 713 'successful' women, in terms of their caste, education level age location and other social indicators? Whilst all women selected by the programme are excluded and therefore poor, not all women within the excluded category share the same constraints and a more refined intersectionality analysis might shed light on the main constraints and enablers for specific groups of women. For example, the AWEE report (2018) shows that education levels have an impact on women's ability to capitalise on their training; such knowledge could have a bearing on more effective targeting or tailoring of interventions to reach out to women who face the most entrenched hurdles. Intersectionality is recognised in the SN 2018-2022 (p2) as a useful concept but it seems it needs more careful application in delivery of interventions.

Additionally, an analysis of which sector generates more income or what proportion this new source of income represents in the total income of the average woman (or the family) would help assess the efficiency of the programme. Women entrepreneurs and activists interviewed for this evaluation share a similar observation about WEE interventions in general: most women struggle to scale up their business despite the training and increased skills and awareness. There are a number of reasons for this, some contextual and some linked to the skills or approaches imparted by economic development programmes (see 3.2.3) but careful monitoring over time after the completion of WEE projects would generate very valuable data to improve programming.

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<sup>63</sup> KII 7, 8, 9



Ultimately the nature of the results framework and approach reflects the learning culture of the programme and perhaps even the conception underlying the programmatic approach. Perhaps, more qualitative indicators are necessary to better understand the nuances.

#### ***4.3.3 Were the resource for economic empowerment programme managed in transparent and accountable manner which promotes equitable and sustainable development?***

UN Women sourced funding from different donors to implement WEE programming, the Government of Finland for AWWE and Zonta International for FWW. A separate report was prepared for each intervention. In the case where output is achieved with the support of other programme, it is mentioned in the report. For example, AWEE performance management framework mentions that GESI strategy for Agriculture Development Strategy [ADS] was achieved through another UN Women programme "Accelerating Progress Towards Economic Empowerment of Rural Women in Nepal".

The implementing partners were contracted to implement the programme following the operating procedure. UN Women closely worked with partners to provide adequate guidance to establish the partnership and implement the activities, one orientation meeting was organized with each partner by UN Women focusing on the key aspects of the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA), reporting (technical and financial) requirements and audit compliance. UN Women also provided the "Result-Based Management and Report Writing Training" to ensure that information generated could fulfil the reporting and learning needs. Funds were utilised to reach the targeted group, for example in FWW, IP had a selection criterion to include target group only, which they shared in the community to avoid the unwarranted pressure to accommodate non-targeted group. Joint monitoring visits were conducted to observe the progress of the activities. Learning and coordination events with the all partners and other organizations working in similar area could have further strengthened the mutual learning and synergy to avoid duplication of work.

In the budget plan, the cost was categorised by programme delivery and programme management support adhering to harmonized results-based budgeting and cost classification methodology applied by UN agencies<sup>10</sup>. Under each broad category, sufficient details were provided. For AWEE, projected programme cost was 61%<sup>64</sup> whereas it was 78%<sup>65</sup> for FWW, which is lower than the regular benchmark of 80%<sup>66</sup>. A Communications and Advocacy Strategy has been developed aiming to increase corporate visibility, support resource mobilisation, and integrate communications and advocacy into programming.

Consultative approach was adopted to develop SN 2018-22. To respond to the changing resource mobilisation climate and the shift in donor priorities and increased competition for resources, the Country Office Resource Mobilisation (RM) Strategy aligns with donor priorities and the 2015 Development Cooperation Policy of Nepal. A Strategic Partnership and Resource Mobilisation (SPRM)

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<sup>64</sup> AWEE Budget

<sup>65</sup> FWW Budget

<sup>66</sup> Integrated budget estimates for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Unit that was formed at the end of 2016 to lead efforts to develop donor profiles, conduct desk reviews of donors' strategic plans for Nepal and identify potential new donors<sup>67</sup>.

#### **4.4 To what extent has UN Women's approach integrated gender equality and human rights in the design and implementation of programmes?**

The human rights based approach (HRBA) has a twofold objective: 1) to empower people (rights-holders) to claim and exercise their rights and 2) to strengthen the capacity of the actors (duty-bearers) who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the poorest, weakest, most marginalized and vulnerable, and to comply with these obligations and duties<sup>68</sup>. The HRBA is also a tool to reach people who are the poorest and most vulnerable. Disaggregation of data on gender and socio-economic dimensions is also an important aspect of the contextual analysis which forms part of a HRBA in order to ensure adequate targeting. HRBA also emphasises that the process is just as important as the focus of analysis - the process of programmes from design through implementation and M&E need to be inclusive and participatory

A gender equality approach similarly seeks to identify who is excluded (not just women but which kind of women and why?), what their structural and social barriers to inclusion are and how institutions can be influenced to be more inclusive<sup>69</sup>. As such a gender equality approach is coherent with the Leave no one behind approach at the heart of the SDGs<sup>70</sup>

##### ***4.4.1 Whether the issues were taken into consideration and analysed while designing the projects***

Promoting equality to women's economic empowerment is one of the strands in the NCO ToC and the expected outcome of the WEE programme is to contribute to Planet 50: 50 objectives. "Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality" asks governments to make national commitments to address the challenges that are holding women and girls back from reaching their full potential. The SN 2014-2017 advocates for a HRBA to programming and recognises the importance of women's participation especially for Dalits and indigenous women, in public life and the need for support for these women. Similarly, the SN 2018-2022 includes an exhaustive analysis of barriers to empowerment and demonstrates a commitment to human rights (HR). The appropriate language of right holders and duty bearer is used in the ToC and the SN 2018-2022. UN Women was also actively involved in the preparation of the IDPG framework on GESI, emphasising a commitment to work on HRBA at normative levels.

UN Women has identified 6 subcategories of excluded women which reflect the diversity within poor and vulnerable women. This reflects an awareness of, and a sensitive approach to the complex social stratification of Nepali society and recognises that different categories of women may face different

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<sup>67</sup> Nepal Country Office – Strategic Note 2018-2022

<sup>68</sup> UNICEF 2015 Introduction to the Human Rights based approach. A guide for Finish NGOs and their partners [http://hrbaportal.org/wp-content/files/HRBA\\_manuaali\\_FINAL\\_pdf\\_small2.pdf](http://hrbaportal.org/wp-content/files/HRBA_manuaali_FINAL_pdf_small2.pdf)

<sup>69</sup> International Development Partners Group 2017. A common framework for Gender equality and Social Inclusion. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion working Group, Kathmandu. [http://hrbaportal.org/wp-content/files/HRBA\\_manuaali\\_FINAL\\_pdf\\_small2.pdf](http://hrbaportal.org/wp-content/files/HRBA_manuaali_FINAL_pdf_small2.pdf)

<sup>70</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/leaving-no-one-behind>

hurdles and thus have different needs to achieve the economic empowerment. This is also evidence that WEE is targeting the poorest women. This acknowledgement is also reflected in the various interventions designed within AWEE and FWW to target different groups of women or provide a variety of inputs. For example, FWW targeted 600 women survivors of trafficking and returnee women migrants. The AWEE programme has provided inputs in awareness raising to women and the wider community through trainings and media campaigns; AWEE also provided skills development (such as taxi driving for returnee migrants) or information about migration.

Though most of the IPs progress reports randomly consulted show that disaggregation of data by caste was considered in terms of participation, there is no disaggregation of results by castes. So whilst we know the per cent of different castes represented amongst the total participants to activities, we don't know the proportion of different castes represented within different groups (is for example the % of Brahmin or Dalits the same across the different categories of exclusion?) nor do we know the % of caste representation amongst successful women (were Brahmin/Chettri or Janajati women more or less likely than Dalit women to go on developing business and grasping new opportunities?). This information is sometimes available<sup>71</sup> but not systematically. This granularity of disaggregation is useful to make correlations and to understand the outcomes of different activities on different women, using caste as an additional layer of social differentiation as it possibly plays a role in the first place in whether a woman is more or less likely to be trafficked, or have HIV.

The evaluation team reflected that intersectionality could be considered more actively by the interventions. It seems that within each of the six categories of exclusion designed by UN Women, women's ability to participate and benefit from the intervention also depend on a variety of factors such as education, marital status, age, whether or not they have migrated or have a migrant family member, distance from the urban areas, access to social, political and financial capital. The results from the group interviews tend to show that women who were already in a relatively better position (for example, with more supportive families, living closer to town or the training venue or better educated) benefitted more from the interventions as they have more capital to grab opportunities. Others who managed to complete trainings against all odds tend to be the ones not able to capitalise on the new skills. Similarly, untouchability which is overlooked in the six categories can be an issue to access market. One IP reported that it is hard to sell products from Dalits<sup>72</sup>, and another KI shared examples (not related to AWEE or FWW) of similar discrimination in a number of projects underlying how common this source of discrimination continues<sup>73</sup>. This would need closer scrutiny to be confirmed through a quantitative survey.

Whilst overall WEE focusses on excluded women, there are limited details within project documents on how women beneficiaries are being selected or how they might have been involved in the programme design. This means the evaluation team was not able to assess whether within categories, specific women may have been targeted, nor whether there were checks to ensure the right women

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<sup>71</sup>UNW-NPL-RFP-2017-004 – Electric Rickshaw (e- rickshaw) Services by Excluded Women for Women, Third progress report, January 2018 or PCA/NPL/01/2016- Developing the Leadership Capacity of Networks of Excluded Women in Nepal, Quarterly report Sabah, January 2018

<sup>72</sup> KII 9

<sup>73</sup> KII 2

were selected or whether efforts were made to seek out most excluded of them all. Some women may have been selected more than once for different activities which could be positive in that repeated support consolidates outcomes. However, if some women are selected more than once it could be because they are more visible and have more opportunities than others which would result in an exclusionary process for those harder to reach women.

#### **4.4.2 Were there any constraints (e.g., political, practical, bureaucratic, etc.) to addressing human rights and gender equality efficiently during implementation?**

One constraint for UN Women’s WEE Programming to achieve gender equality is linked to the transition process and the continued unsettled current political context despite a transition to federalism. For example, the annual report of 2017 reports that a number of high-level policy meetings and consultations did not happen as planned because of the elections<sup>74</sup>.

*‘No additional progress was reported in 2017 and 2018 as the process of policy reviews had been delayed in the light of introduction of the new federal structure in the governance system. Recommendations to the amendment of the Foreign Employment Act were submitted to the Government through a development partners’ coordination platform in 2017, but the approval of the amendment has been pending.’*

See Annex A PMF WEE progress update 2018

Whilst all interviewees consider federalism a tremendous opportunity, especially as it provided women with unprecedented access to public office, the delays in filling posts at local, provincial and federal levels (The head of the Nepal Women’s Commission for example has not been named yet) , the rapid turn-over of staff (in 3 years there have been 3 ministers and 5 secretary at the ministry of Ministry of Women, Children, Senior Citizens alone)<sup>75</sup> undermine institutional memory and slow down progress. The lack of institutional memory is also apparent at the local level. For example, the field evaluation team found that for Godawari and Kohalpur the federal Unit did not have any records of

*‘The women who make it big are usually women with political connection with social capital. Social capital increases trust and they can then more easily access credit or other investments.’*

Source: KII 9

past capacity building events or interventions. This can lead to replicated training when the local government organises training duplicating CSO interventions or vice versa<sup>76</sup>.

The lack of transparency on policy development, also makes it difficult for UN Women and donors in general to fully engage with the government.

Civil Society partners are also a bit unsettled as a new bill on CSO regulation is under discussion which could have, CSO interviewees claim, a detrimental effect to the exercise of Human rights<sup>77</sup>.

Despite an official government commitment to GESI, parliamentarians at the federal level are still resistant to open the way for equality. For example, the recent Citizenship Equality Bill which aimed

<sup>74</sup> Annex A PMF WEE progress update 2018 indicator 2.2.4b

<sup>75</sup> KII 16

<sup>76</sup> KII 14

<sup>77</sup> KII 1, 6, 8

to reduce the delay (from 15 to 7 years) for women’s rights to transfer their nationality to their children when they are married to a non-Nepali citizen was rejected. This bill would have still maintained inequality between men and women (as men can transfer their citizenship automatically without delay), but even a reduction of inequality was rejected. Thus, the political context and the speed of implementation of federalism remain a huge challenge to equality and more specifically for programme such as WEE to get the full structural support needed.

#### ***4.4.3 To what extent has the programme engaged key beneficiaries, especially those representing marginalized community and belonging to vulnerable group, in planning and monitoring of the intervention?***

UN Women follows a multi-stakeholder consultation process whilst designing programmes or interventions. However, at the intervention level itself, there is limited evidence from our field interviews that key beneficiaries have been involved in the planning and monitoring. Districts and target groups were decided by UN Women staff (after consultation with CSO partners) and during the procurement process, CSO service providers responded to clearly specified conditions for services: for example, one provider described how the call for proposal included specified numbers of trainings, the type of training for what kind of audience<sup>78</sup>. Whilst this makes sense from a procurement perspective it does not leave much margin for adaptation and consultation at the local level. One interviewee mentioned that sometimes what was planned in the call does not fully match the reality on the ground, but because the provider is contracted to deliver a specific service, they will deliver what was agreed even when they feel there might have been more effective or relevant ways to enhance capacity<sup>79</sup>. Information from the municipality level confirms that CSOs contacted the municipality for contacting details of potential participants rather than involve them in choice of targets or in prioritisation of activities<sup>80</sup>.

Women beneficiaries interviewed have confirmed that they were fully made aware of the selection criteria for participation and that the information dissemination about campaigns or training opportunities were done in a proper manner. However, the evaluation field team found that the fairness in filling the quota for participation was not always fulfilled. One service provider confirmed that the pressure to fulfil the

*‘The massive federal restructuring and legal reforms of the Government of Nepal (GoN) spurred an extremely challenging programming environment. Confusing and incomplete structures impeded the fulfilment of GoN’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE) commitments, including the UNSCR 1325/1820 National Action Plan (NAP) II, which remains pending for adoption. The gender budget rose from 37.42 in FY 201/2018 to 38.65 per cent in FY 2018/19 as directly gender-responsive, but unclear roles and division of responsibilities of GoN entities hampered efforts on sub-national laws and policies, service delivery and budget expenditures.’*

Source: UN Women NCO annual report 2018

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<sup>78</sup> KII 9, 11

<sup>79</sup> KII 11

<sup>80</sup> FDG/KII in field

contract at times encourages field teams to 'seek the low hanging fruits' and for example, a participant's proximity to the event (such as a training) may trump the criteria of vulnerability or exclusion. This is why women who are more visible or who have already undertaken training may be targeted, as there is limited time to seek out women who may not be supported by their families, or women who live too far away from the training venue (see also comment on intersectionality 4.4.1).

# 5. CONCLUSIONS

This thematic evaluation sought to answer questions related to relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The analysis of documentary evidence, complemented with field visits and KII concluded that:

- **There is no doubt that WEE is relevant to the current Nepali policy and social context.** The SN are aligned with the GoN's commitment to advance gender equality. The federal system with the decentralisation and new responsibilities of newly elected representatives has created an unprecedented need for capacity building at all levels of governance in the country which WEE is partially trying to address. The new constitution also offers a space to work on gender equality, and there is a recognition of the importance of achieving economic empowerment for women to achieve Planet 50:50. Key Informants have emphasised the need to focus on women's economic empowerment as a way to contribute towards equality between the genders. Ideas as to how further enhance UN Women's WEE work are discussed in Section 5.
- **The effectiveness of UN Women's WEE programming is mixed. Some constraints are beyond the NCO's control.**

UN Women works in three domains, normative, operational and coordination and similarly WEE has been focusing on these three. **Progress in normative work at policy has been slower than expected** due to the transition context; **however normative work in terms of sensitising citizens has achieved momentum** by increasing the number of trained and informed excluded women about their rights.

**Operationally the work with women on the ground has shown progress in terms of delivering outputs.** More excluded women involved in the interventions are able to generate income as a result of WEE interventions and this is starting to have an impact on their place in the family and on gender dynamics. However, the ability for women to translate new skills into more sustainable and substantial income or larger scale business remain a challenge for many women. There was also limited evidence that the most excluded women have been reached and involved.

Whilst AWEE and FWW have delivered results which can arguably be considered as contributing towards WEE expected outcomes it is difficult to be conclusive on whether WEE delivers on its outcomes as expressed in the ToC. Whilst activities have targeted men and youth to tackle cultural and social norms, behaviour change on the ground will be slow and take more than ad hoc trainings or mobilisation campaigns. The current political context has made it difficult for UN Women to influence macro-economic policies as hoped. And finally, activities implemented within AWEE and FWW have targeted excluded women and their economic empowerment but they have not specifically addressed climate resilience, agriculture or the energy sector. Arguably the team did not review all the programmes implemented under WEE by the NCO or jointly with other partners.

Whilst there is evidence that some vulnerable women involved in the programme and project have improved their income generation potential it is difficult to conclude on their level of resilience to climate change and disaster: therefore the team concludes that there are some encouraging signs of WEE contribution towards Planet 50:50 and equality between men and women may be improved by 2022. However how much WEE will have contributed to this will be difficult to determine.

Progress in normative work at policy has been slower than expected due to the transition context; however normative work in terms of sensitising citizens has achieved its targets of awareness raising and information sharing. Operationally the work with women on the ground has shown progress in terms of delivering outputs; results on impacts are more mixed and the ability for women to translate new skills into income or larger scale business remain a challenge for many women because of on-going structural constraints which will require a longer time span commitment, especially if transformative change is to be achieved. **The biggest undisputable impact, commented on by women, men and various actors is the change in women's attitude and self confidence in their rights and ability to claim their rights, access information and contribute to public life.**

- **UN Women largely adopts the standard practice** in managing resource, and engaging stakeholders specially in developing the strategies. Funds were utilised as planned to reach the beneficiaries. However, some attention to the results framework to integrate more outcome focus indicators would strengthen the capacity to improve reflective practice to measure change.

- **UN Women's WEE approach is aligned to HRBA and gender equality at the programme level.** The strategic note, the ToC the WEE programme and the AWEE and FWW proposal all are in line with a HRBA to programming and gender equality objectives. The political context remains the main challenge to advance gender equality in the country as implementation of existing legislation is slow and work on normative issues is disrupted by political instability.

In project delivery, partners sometimes feel constrained by contractual conditions which do not always allow full participation of beneficiaries in planning and monitoring as the time frame for intervention delivery is short and partners deliver a service to specifications dictated by the ToRs of the projects. Partners do not always have sufficient time or incentives to reach out to the most vulnerable and excluded women within each category of excluded women. The pressure of delivering the contracts at times results in focusing on quick wins rather than on using better tailored made approaches to capacity building.

The main risk to achieve gender equality is linked to the transition context, though the political context is gradually stabilising.

The WEE ToC is based on 3 strands: 1) **Sensitizing** men, youth and faith-leaders on the constraints presented by cultural norms; 2) **Developing and implementing** macro-economic policies supporting WEE and 3) **Testing and adopting for upscaling** a substantive equality approach to women's economic empowerment in select target sectors for income generation and improved climate resilient livelihoods. The second strand has seen limited activities due to the current transition context. Arguably there have been activities in the first and third strands. However, the evaluation team would



argue that whilst the 'testing' of approaches has happened there is a missing link between the 'testing' and 'upscaling' at three levels:

- In order to deliver lessons for upscaling the 'testing' would need a design in the programming where variables are identical or at least comparable. Trying out different activities (with different time frames and length) in different locations with different populations of women all facing different issues, without closely monitoring processes of change, makes it difficult to identify clear cause and effect results chains and thus make clear recommendations.
- The limited programmatic focus on learning itself makes it more difficult to draw lessons. The M&E framework is results focused encouraging partners to report on their outputs and outcomes rather than to be analytical. The absence of specific learning moments facilitated centrally by UN Women at programme level means that the WEE programme has limited capacity to for example say: 'this type of intervention, will work (or not) for this type of excluded women for these reasons in this context and therefore these are the policy recommendation for scaling up'.
- And finally, the lack of direct connection with the provincial and municipality levels during planning and implementation means that the programme is perceived as just another intervention rather than an opportunity to co-test and co-learn between UN-Women, its partners and the local authorities. Whilst the SN of the NCO are developed in consultation with stakeholders, the implementation of the WEE as one of the components of the SN is not sufficiently embedded within the local authority context. There was limited awareness of the activities amongst the KII interviewed about some of the activities and it seemed that different IPs had different levels of communications with the municipality office.

There is no doubt that most women participants to various activities proposed under AWEE and FWW have benefitted. However, to be an effective programme from which lessons can be drawn for policy advocacy and for contributing to transformational change, WEE will need UN Women to play a stronger coordination facilitation role between partners and with local authorities and develop a more explicit learning culture within WEE.

## 6. LESSONS LEARNT

Key informants were asked to share their lessons learnt in terms of their understanding of the effectiveness of the interventions. Some of these may not be new as such, but have been reinforced through the experiences of partners and beneficiaries

- **‘Without family support nothing can happen: husbands have to be on board’**: This is by far the most striking message women beneficiaries, but also partners in the field and KII have shared. Therefore, continuing work on raising awareness, influencing societal change and work with decision makers in the family is important.
- **‘We need more investment especially for vulnerable women’**. Vulnerable women by definition face more hurdles and therefore need more support over a longer time at different steps of their development. Not only do they need support to acquire vocational and business development skills, but they also need support to maintain their business, find markets, access capital and information. They also need help to move up the supply chain. Pressure on duty bearers to improve transparency and to remove structural constraints is also part of this investment.
- **‘There is a need for follow up and going back to the same trainees to reinforce initial efforts; programmes are too short’**. Illiterate women or with low education levels have different cognitive abilities than educated women or women who have been exposed to opportunities. Excluded women also are excluded for different reasons and may have different needs which may evolve as their situation improves. There is therefore a need to continuously upgrade their skills and knowledge;
- **‘There is great need of counselling: skills are not sufficient’**. There has been growing awareness at UN Women and amongst partners of the need for emotional support. Women who have been considered second-class citizens for generations lack self-confidence and have low self-esteem. Dalit women in particular are more likely to self-select not to attend trainings for example or women who have been survivors of domestic violence and live in fear are not in a mental state to just be open to new opportunities, especially risky ones. Providing psychosocial support helps a great deal to put women in the right frame of mind

# 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations were discussed and validated during the final multi stakeholder workshop.

**7.1 Embed the programme within the local structures** by working more explicitly with municipalities by:

- 7.1.1 Involving municipalities in local needs assessments, the choice of activities, the target of beneficiaries and the monitoring; align WEE interventions to GESI municipal plans and budgets
- 7.1.2 Find entry points such as existing government programmes. Collaborate with business organisations or local municipalities associations. This may remain a challenge for as long as political uncertainty affects local governance.

**7.2 Continue work along the supply chain and also invest in demand creation:** many donors, federal and local government initiatives focus on skills building, but what is needed is helping women scaling up, branding, business development, quality control, and access to finance. Perhaps interventions supported by WEE should focus more on scaling up. Also invest in demand side by bringing those women have yet to establish link with income generating activities.

**7.3 A stronger focus on migration upstream:** Nepal's explicit policy of exporting labour abroad has a huge impact (both positive and negative) on Nepali society and especially on women. Whether women are trafficked or excluded returnees, whether they have been sexually assaulted, exploited or whether they have relatives abroad, their lives are being affected. Though this was not a focus of the evaluation the theme emerged in different contexts as a factor influencing WEE: migration can lead to social exclusion for returnees, but it can also provide, financial capital, impetus for risk taking and enterprise spirit, or it can demotivate as remittances can make small scale enterprises un-competitive. All these aspects need further study, to separate myths from reality. But women also need more information and better awareness to migrate safely if they chose to do so. A comprehensive study could be recommended to unfold the issues of women migration and its effect on social dimension. This would also generate valuable insights into barriers and opportunities to WEE.

**7.4 Strengthen the programmatic approach:** In a programme the whole needs to be bigger than the sum of the parts. It has to have synergies:

A coordinating and facilitation between the various strands and partners are needed. Fostering a common understanding amongst partners of the overall programmatic strategy and the concept of transformational change will help partners becoming partners rather than being service providers;

- 7.4.1 Timing of interventions need to be dictated by the logic of the programme and be less dependent on procurement and contractual delays. Partners could work more in parallel or in a synchronistic way with each other to increase effectiveness and efficiency;
- 7.4.2 UN Women needs to play a central role in promoting reflection and learning with its partners as well as within the programme team; this can happen through organising learning events with field staff of partners and local representatives since they are the ones who know what is happening on the ground; these events should focus on lessons learnt or be the opportunity to brainstorm on specific learning questions (as opposed to sharing project updates);
- 7.4.3 A M&E system supportive of programmatic learning will be useful; the ToC could be developed more to make pathways of change more detailed and explicit; data along the cause and effect chain need to be collected to be able to assess the likelihood of contribution; baselines need to be developed for sample beneficiaries populations to be able to monitor progress towards outcomes. A more participatory approach to M&E (such through beneficiary assessment for example) would also strengthen the capacity of local authorities and partners;

**7.5 Deepen understanding of target populations by supporting action research projects** embedded within interventions to scrutinise how social differences and intersectionality affect women's ability to fully benefit from interventions or maintain exclusion. Action research promotes reflection and provides the opportunity for live lessons learnt to be applied to change course of interventions. This would help tailoring interventions to specific categories of women more effectively and will focus partners on reflecting and learning what works for who and why/how.

# ANNEX 1: PERSONS/ INSTITUTIONS MET

1. Anjana Shakya, Alliance against Trafficking in Women and Children in Nepal (AATWIN)
2. Babita Basnet, Media Advocacy Group
3. Bimala Paudel Rai, Member, National Assembly
4. Binita Shrestha, Equal Access
5. Bivek Joshi, Programme Analyst/M&E Officer, UN Women
6. Chhaya Jha, GESI Specialist, HURDEC
7. Gitangali Singh, UN Women Deputy Country Representative in Nepal
8. Gopal Tiwari, FNCCI
9. Kalpana Khatiwada, Under Secretary, National Women Commission
10. Kati Bhowse, Finnish Embassy
11. Mahalakshmi Shrestha, FWEAN executive member
12. Mio Yokota, WEE Unit Manager, UN Women
13. Purushottam Adhikari, Vocational and Skill Development Training, GON
14. Radhika Regmi, DCD, IFES programme
15. Shava Neupan, Branch Manager, Global IME Bank
16. Sheelagh O'Reilly, Team Leader, Climate Change Programme, IOD Park/DFID
17. Suman Subah, ADB
18. Sunit Adhikari, F-Skill
19. Swasti Pradhan, Director social enterprise, Sustainable Business initiative
20. Wenny Kusuma, UN Women Representative to Nepal

# ANNEX 2: DOCUMENTS

## CONSULTED

### WEE Thematic Evaluation – Checklist for Desk Review Documents

SN	List of Documents	Status	Remarks
<b>1.</b>	<b>Strategic Notes (SN) and Annual work plans (AWP)</b>		
1.1	SN 2014 - 2017	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
1.2	SN 2018 - 2022	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
1.3	AWP 2019	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.4	AWP 2018	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
1.5	AWP 2017	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
1.6	AWP 2016	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.7	AWP 2015	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1.8	AWP 2014	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>NCO Annual Reports</b>		
2.1	Annual Report 2018	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2.2	Annual Report 2017	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2.3	Annual Report 2016	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2.4	Annual Report 2015	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.5	Annual Report 2014	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Donor reports for specific programmes and initiatives (including all programme related documents)</b>		
3.1	The Future We Want: Creating Sustainable Foundations for Addressing Human Trafficking and Unsafe Migration of Women and Girls in Nepal (FWW)		
3.1.1	Programme formulation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.1.2	Donor agreement and ProDoc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.1.3	Donor reports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.1.4	Project Steering Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.1.5	Partnership with IOM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.1.6	Project activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.1.7	Monitoring missions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.2	Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment (AWEE)		
3.2.1	Programme formulation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.2.2	Donor agreement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.2.3	ProDoc	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

3.2.4	Mid-term review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.2.5	Donor reports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3.2.6	Review meetings with donor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.2.7	Project Steering Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.2.8	Programme activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.2.9	Monitoring missions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Mid-term Evaluation and any other relevant evaluations</b>		
4.1	Mid-term review of AWEE programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Knowledge and communication products from programmes or from the CO in relation to WEE</b>		
5.1	UN-Women-Evaluation-Handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5.2	UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Policies in Nepal: Government of Nepal and others</b>		
6.1	The Constitution of Nepal, 2015	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6.2	15 <sup>th</sup> Periodic Plan (Approach Paper)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6.3	National Census Report, 2011, CBS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6.4	Sustainable Development Goals, Nepal Road Map	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6.5	A Common Framework for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, 2017	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
6.6	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

# ANNEX 3: TOOLS AND QUESTIONNAIRE TEMPLATES

This document includes the information relevant for the field work.

Field work at district level should be planned between the 15<sup>th</sup> of July and the 20<sup>th</sup> of August.

- Deepa will go with Sarita to district 1 week of 15<sup>th</sup> of July and district 2 in week 22.
- Sarita will visit 2 more districts and Chanda one more district.
- In each district you will visit 2 municipalities and organise 5 groups (2 women beneficiaries, 1 men only, 1 young men only and 1 young women only) and try to interview 2-3 KII at Palika office)

**Notes from field interviews should be stored at the end of each district. And should be labelled as follow:**

- Title of respondent, place, date: e.g. IP/GS Dhading. Karki.1507 or for groups
- Group type, municipality date: e.g. WB (women beneficiaries), chautara.1507
- IP: implementing partner; GS Government staff; PS: Palika staff
- WB women beneficiaries; MG: men group; YF youth Females, YM: youth males

Interview answers or group discussions should be stored in tables by questions (see example below):

Name of file:		
Thematic area of question	Answer	Comments?
<b>Challenges to EE</b> (economic empowerment)		
What are women’s main challenges for EE? What specific barrier do they face? Can they prioritise the challenges?		
How many of the women present have access to paid employment, is it regular?		

It will help you if you prepare the templates before you go to the field, so you can fill in the templates at the end of each day.



UN Women should provide us with contact details of IP (implementing partner/s) in the different districts/municipalities who can organise the group meetings and the interviews.

The table indicates the kind of information we are hoping to get from different **stakeholder groups**

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Leading theme of interview</b>
<b>UN Women staff</b> (program manager, M&E officer)	Background information on programme and implementation, M&E results framework and organisational information, impact of federalism
<b>National level</b> (Key Informants- some at international level, government and implementing partners IP)	Independent feedback on relevance of the programme, relevance of initiatives within the programmes and the context. Implementing partners will also provide feedback on UN Women procedures;
<b>Provincial level</b> (Key Informants, government and implementing partners IP)	Nature of relationship and collaboration between WEE programme and decentralised bureaucracy, perception on contribution of WEE programme towards institutional and legal changes; feedback form IP the various strands of the programme
<b>Municipality level</b> (GESI focal point, Implementing partner staff and other relevant stakeholder representative such as private sector actors)	Perception on WEE as a concept, needs to address WEE constraints and opportunities at municipality level, level of awareness of UN Women programme, nature of collaboration and involvement between Implementing partners and UN Women management team;
<b>Beneficiaries in 2 municipalities per district</b>	Feedback from women beneficiaries on relevance and outcome of involvement in AWEE and FWW; what has changed in their lives (if anything) as a result of taking part to activities; perceptions of men, women and youth on WEE? Challenges and opportunities, examples of good practice

## **Semi structured group discussion- women beneficiaries**

**Main evaluation question:** How effective UN Women contributions have been in progress towards achieving the results? We want to understand what is women' beneficiaries perceptions of their economic empowerment status and how much can potentially be attributed to the WEE programme.

**Note to enumerator:** *In this group interview we try to gather women's views on the activities they have been involved in through the projects. We are not measuring impact but more seeking to hear from women, what was useful, what was missing, whilst also gathering examples of good practice or success stories. We are also trying to get a broader picture of women's context and capabilities (are they involved in public life, are they well informed about their rights and responsibilities of duty bearers? Please, start by introducing yourself and explain briefly what you are doing and why.*

**Duration of interview:** approximately 30/45 minutes

**Sample of participants:** Key programme beneficiaries

**Name of municipality:**

**Date:**

**Project/activity involved with:**

**Facilitator Name:**

NB: Obtain consent for the audio recording and participation.

### **Introduction**

1. Ask participants to introduce themselves. (name, occupation)
2. In what capacity were you involved in project X (did they have a specific role or simply beneficiaries?)

Questions	Details	Tools
<b>Challenges to EE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are women's main challenges for EE?</li> <li>• What specific barrier do they face?</li> <li>• Can they prioritise the challenges?</li> </ul>	<b>Quick ranking exercise</b> for prioritising: let's say they have 6 stones to share across 3-5 challenges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many of the women present have access to paid employment, is it regular?</li> </ul>	Show of hands
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they participate to public life?</li> <li>• Are some of the women present playing some role in the community (social mobilisers, women's leaders..)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How transparent is their Palika?</li> <li>• How easy is it for women to have access to information?</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they part of groups (such as savings, user, forestry/user groups? Or CAC?)</li> </ul>	Show of hands for groups and how many groups?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the municipality been recipient of major government or donor projects? (<i>like LGCDP for example</i>)</li> <li>• Has there been a DAG<sup>81</sup> mapping exercise?) Is there a CAC (citizen awareness centre)</li> </ul>	
<b>Changes in their lives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All considered, have women experience changes in their living condition in the last few years?</li> <li>• Has women's access and control to assets changed? Has women's status within the household changed?</li> <li>• Do they have more or less cash? If more cash where does it come from?</li> <li>• Are they able to do new things they could not do before? (<i>Not just in term of purchasing power but also access to services, mobility?</i>)</li> <li>• What did they do after the training for example? Here it is important to gather concrete examples.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Use a life line exercise:</b> draw a line which represents time and plot today at one end and maybe the last few years at the other.</p> <p>Ask women to plot on top of the line all the good things/changes that happened and below the bad things in their lives.</p>

<sup>81</sup> Disadvantaged Group Mapping

		Once it is done then probe for cause of change. <i>(Some changes may be due to the project specifically but some could be due to infrastructure development in municipality, recent elections, a family member who migrated...)</i>
<b>Participation to project</b>	<p>Narrow down on the project (if not mentioned /discussed before) and ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did they get involved (how did they knew about the project, did they volunteer, were they selected?)</li> <li>• What was the main contribution/result of their participation?</li> <li>• Do they know women who wanted to be involved but could not? (Why?) Main benefits?</li> <li>• Was there some cost? Ask for concrete examples.</li> </ul> <p>Please note that in the group there may be women who have been exposed to different interventions or women who have benefitted from more than one intervention. Make sure to note this</p>	
<b>Vision for the future?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is women’s vision for the future: what do they hope for themselves/their daughters?</li> <li>• And how do they plan to achieve it?</li> </ul>	

### **Focus group discussion: youth (females)**

A focus group is different from a semi structured group discussion in that the number is smaller and the facilitator does not really ask questions but facilitate a discussion. Here we want to know what women think about economic empowerment, so the facilitator explains the aim of the discussion (to get young people's view on WEE) and let them talk and see what happens. We won't want to ask them directly do you think project X was useful but more let them explain why they think WEE is good or bad, let them provide examples of change: have they seen changes amongst the women in their community/family as a result of economic activities and in what way? By asking young women we want to see how they see their future; we can also compare to young men's views and see differences and similarities.

The group should sit in a circle and the facilitator should explain that this is a discussion between the participants and that she will watch and listen and from time to time she may rephrase or prompt. The facilitator mostly watches the reactions, the comments that are made: what is the line of argument? Is the audience divided, i.e. do some women hold a different view from the majority, are there plenty of views? In a FG, watching the dynamic and reflecting on what is happening is as important as the factual information we may get.

The difference between this FG and the group discussion with women is that here we ask women about WE in general whilst when we talk to beneficiaries, we are specifically seeking feedback on the programme.

**Duration of discussion:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Number of participants:** -6-8 max

**Name of municipality:**

**What kind of work they do?**

**Do any of them have a wife/sister who has benefitted from one of the AWEE network's or FWW?**

**Date:**

**Facilitator Name:**

**Note taker Name:**<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> NB: Obtain Consent for the audio recording and participation.

General pointers	Sub-questions to guide the group discussion- these are more pointers for facilitation than direct questions	Our aim
<b>Is WEE a good or bad thing overall?</b>	<p>Here we would like young women to discuss amongst themselves on this topic; may be you need to explain a bit they may not understand 'WEE'.</p> <p>Also avoid talking about the specific project, but more generally ask what they think about women getting paid jobs out of the house or even the village</p>	<p>To understand youth's perceptions on WEE but also to identify social constraints imposed on women or the ones men impose on women; it may be ok for women to earn money in the village but not outside; some young men may be ok with their wife/sister to work but their extended family or social circle bully them for accepting this.</p>
<b>Have they seen changes?</b>	<p>Here we are interested in economic /social changes (if their mother/sister/herself has more money what does she do with it for example?) but also social changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are women more confident (rebellious? Independent), have men's role in the HH changed? In what ways?</li> </ul>	<p>To identify potential societal and behavioural changes. WEE may bring some additional income to some women but does this make a difference in a strategic way? Is women's position in the HH shifting for example?</p>
<b>Do they think something could /should change?</b>	<p>Depending on how the discussion goes, young people could be asked whether they see society changing anyway (what are the forces of change?)</p>	<p>Here just trying to get a sense of how young women project themselves in the future? How they see their role in the family? Could they potentially be bread winners?</p>
<b>Do they know about the AWEE/FWW interventions?</b>		<p>This is just to check how well commonly known these interventions are</p>

<p><b>What are women's political/participation in public life ambitions?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are these young women's participation currently in public life?</li> <li>• Has federalism change their level of participation? Would they like to participate more?</li> <li>• Do they see this as a man's domain?</li> </ul>	<p>Here we try to gage young women's interest and capacities.</p> <p>And try to see where it comes from, whether they are inspired by many more women entering public life?</p>
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### **Focus group discussion: youth (males)**

A focus group is different from a semi structured group discussion in that the number is smaller and the facilitator does not really ask questions but facilitate a discussion. Here we want to know what men think about women economic empowerment, so the facilitator explains the aim of the discussion (to get young people's view on WEE) and let them talk and see what happens. We won't want to ask them directly do you think project X was useful but more let them explain why they think WEE is good or bad, let them provide examples of change: have they seen changes amongst the women in their community/family as a result of economic activities and in what way? By asking young men we want to see whether there is a general gap in perception. Young men are not necessarily supportive of change as some feel they are losing out and could be resisting even more than their elders.

The group should sit in a circle and the facilitator should explain that this is a discussion between the participants and that she will watch and listen and from time to time she may rephrase or prompt. The facilitator mostly watches the reactions, the comments that are made: what is the line of argument? Is the audience divided, ie do some youth hold a different view from the majority, are there plenty of views? In a FG, watching the dynamic and reflecting on what is happening is as important as the factual information we may get.

**Duration of discussion:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Number of participants:** -6-8 max

**Name of settlement:**

**What kind of work they do?**

**Have any of them have a wife/sister who has benefitted from AWEE or FWW?**

**Date:**

**Facilitator Name:**

**Note taker Name:**<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> NB: Obtain Consent for the audio recording and participation.

General pointers	Sub-questions to guide the group discussion (these are pointers rather than direct questions)	Our aim
<b>Is WEE a good or bad thing overall?</b>	<p>Here we would like men to discuss amongst themselves on this topic; may be you need to explain a bit they may not understand 'WEE'.</p> <p>Also avoid talking about the specific project, but more generally ask what they think about women getting paid jobs out of the house or even the village</p>	<p>To understand youth's perceptions on WEE but also to identify social constraints imposed on men or the ones men impose on women; it may be ok for women to earn money in the village but not outside; some young men may be ok with their wife/sister to work but their extended family or social circle bully them for accepting this</p>
<b>Have they seen changes?</b>	<p>Here we are interested in economic changes (if their wife/sister has more money what does she do with it for example?) but also social changes: are women more confident (rebellious? Independent), have men's role in the HH changed?</p>	<p>To identify potential societal and behavioural changes. WE may bring some additional income to some women but does this make a difference in a strategic way? I.e. is women's position in the HH shifting for example?</p>
<b>Do they think something could /should change?</b>	<p>Depending on how the discussion goes, young people could be asked whether they see society changing anyway (what are the forces of change?)</p>	<p>Here just trying to get a sense of how young men project themselves in the future? How they see their role of sole bread winner?</p>
<b>What do they feel about more women in public life?</b>		<p>Trying to get a sense of how accepting the next generation is of women playing more visible roles in public life and what may be the remaining barriers.</p>

### **Focus group discussion: Men**

A focus group is different from a semi structured group discussion in that the number is smaller and the facilitator does not really ask questions but facilitate a discussion. Here we want to know what men think about women economic empowerment, so the facilitator explains the aim of the discussion (to get men's view on WEE) and let them talk and see what happens. We won't want to ask them directly do you think project X was useful but more let them explain why they think WEE is good or bad, let them provide examples of change: have they seen their wives change and in what way? Thus, the group should sit in a circle and the facilitator should explain that this is a discussion between the men and that she will watch and listen and from time to time she may rephrase or prompt. The facilitator mostly watches the reactions, the comments that are made: what is the line of argument? Is the audience divided, i.e., do some men hold a different view from the majority, are there plenty of views? In a FG, watching the dynamic and reflecting on what is happening is as important as the factual information we may get.

**Duration of discussion:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Number of participants:** -6-8 max

**Sample of participants:**

**What kind of work they do?**

**Municipality:**

**Have any of them have a wife/sister who has benefitted from AWEE or FWW?**

**Date:**

**Facilitator Name:**

**Note taker Name:**<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> NB: Obtain Consent for the audio recording and participation.

General pointers	Sub-questions to guide the group discussion (these are pointers rather than direct questions)	Our aim
<b>Is WEE a good or bad thing overall?</b>	<p>Here we would like men to discuss amongst themselves on this topic; may be you need to explain a bit as men may not understand 'WEE'.</p> <p>Also avoid talking about the specific project, but more generally ask what they think about women getting paid jobs out of the house or even the village; what do they see the good at bad points might be?</p>	<p>To understand men's perceptions on WEE but also to identify social constraints imposed on men or the ones men impose on women; it may be ok for women to earn money in the village but not outside; some men may be ok with their wife/sister to work but their extended family or social circle bully him for accepting this</p>
<b>Have they seen changes?</b>	<p>Here we are interested in economic changes (if their wife/sister has more money what does she do with it for example?) but also social changes: are women more confident (rebellious? Independent), have men's role in the HH changed?</p>	<p>To identify potential societal and behavioural changes. WE may bring some additional income to some women but does this make a difference in a strategic way? I.e. is women's position in the HH shifting for example?</p>
<b>What do they feel about more women in public life?</b>		<p>Trying to get a sense of how accepting men are of women playing more visible roles in public life and what may be the remaining barriers.</p>

## **Key Informant interviews- Municipality level**

At municipality level we are seeking information on:

- 1) municipality staff's perception on WE and their capacity to implement GESI strategies;
- 2) the nature of the relationship between the municipality and the WEE activities (AWEE and FWW) as implemented in the municipality; and
- 3) some perspective on WEE itself, how it is progressing in their locality (are there ongoing projects?) Do they see some changes and 4) what the bureaucracy is currently doing for WEE at provincial/district level.

This is also the opportunity to gauge ownership of the local level of WEE and GESI concepts, which would give us some sense of the probability of sustainability. A typical KI at this level would be the GESI focal point/women and children officer, the chief administrative officer of the Palika/ Mayor/Deputy Mayor (depending on availability). Please also try to meet staff from the Implementing partner if not at municipality, then at district level. Questions below can be relevant to IP staff as well.

**Duration of discussion:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Name:**

**Role/position:**

**Municipality:**

**Date:**

**Facilitator Name:**

**Note taker Name:**

**NB: Obtain Consent for the audio recording and participation.**

Themes of questions	Pointers	Comments/aim
<p><b>The status of WEE in the municipality</b></p>	<p>What are the main constraints to WEE in the Palika? Is the Palika undertaking some specific actions to overcome the challenges? Has the Palika been funding specific activities for women /DAGs?</p> <p>May be ask about services: health post? School? Bank?</p> <p>Is there a project/program being implemented in the municipality?</p> <p>Ask also about migration? Is migration a big issue in Palika?</p> <p>Does migration create incentive to the women to engage in economic activities?</p>	<p>They are supposed to by law to fund GESI activities, but what are they doing in practice, what kind of activities?</p> <p>By asking the same questions to IP we get can validate/triangulate what the Palika response is. We want to have an overview picture of the municipality socio-economic context.</p>
<p><b>Knowledge and perception of the IP activity (either FWW or AWEE) Question for Palika only</b></p>	<p>How much does the Palika officer/staff know about this activity? If they do know, then ask what they know: i.e. how was the activity implemented, did the IP discuss with Palika what the activity should be or how women would be selected etc.?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was there a specific need for this activity in this municipality?</li> <li>• Was there a needs analysis?</li> </ul>	<p>Here we want to know how much connection/integration there is between Palika and IP activities. If the Palika responds that they have no knowledge of the activity then validate with IP; is this true and if so, why did they not involved the Palika?</p>

<b>Question for IP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was there a specific need for this activity in this municipality?</li> <li>• Was there a needs analysis; how was the municipality chosen?</li> <li>• How are women participants chosen? Do they self-selected? Or are they identified?</li> <li>• How are women reached/informed about the intervention?</li> <li>• Does the project keep disaggregated data of ethnicity/caste?</li> </ul>	We want to understand better the rationale for location and activity choice; disaggregation of data allows to monitor degree of inclusiveness.
<b>Changes</b>	Have they seen any changes in women EE, or in gender behaviour? How much do they feel it can be due to the activity of the IP?	Here we are looking for clues/evidence that there are effect/results from the activities.

## **Key Informant interviews- Provincial/District**

At both the provincial level we are seeking similar information (than for the municipality), we want to:

- 1) understand the nature of the relationship between the province or the district and the WEE activities (AWEE and FWW) as implemented in the locality;
- 2) to get some perspective on WEE itself, how it is progressing in their locality; and
- 3) what the bureaucracy is currently doing for WEE at provincial/district level.

At this level KI are government staff, implementation organisation staff and if relevant/ applicable some INGO/NGO programme staff which may be present in the location who may be working on GESI or WEE.

**Duration of discussion:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Name:**

**Role/position:**

**Province/district:**

**Date:**

**Facilitator Name:**

**Note taker Name:**

**NB: Obtain Consent for the audio recording and participation.**



Themes of questions	Pointers	Comments/aim
<b>The status of WEE in the province/district</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the main constraints to WEE ?</li> <li>• Can they comment on the activities of Municipality we are visiting and share their perspective on the municipality?</li> <li>• What are the projects /program being implemented in the district we are visiting?</li> <li>• Ask also about migration?</li> </ul>	They may not have much detail; we are mostly interested in getting the bigger socio-economic picture on the district.
<b>Knowledge and perception of the IP activity (either FWW or AWEE) Question for Palika only</b>	How much do they know about this activity? If they do know, then ask what they know: i.e. how was the activity started, did the IP discuss with the provincial/district level?	Here we want to know how much the local administration is aware of these activities and whether there is some form of strategic thinking at this level for the management of donors interventions
<b>Question for IP (these questions are the same as for municipality level, but you need to ask only once, either here or at municipality- depending on who is available)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was there a specific need for this activity in this municipality?</li> <li>• Was there a needs analysis; how was the municipality chosen?</li> <li>• How are women participants chosen?</li> <li>• Do they self-selected? Or are they identified?</li> <li>• How are women reached/informed?</li> <li>• Does the project keep disaggregated data of ethnicity/caste?</li> </ul>	We want to understand better the rationale for location and activity choice; disaggregation of data allows to monitor degree of inclusiveness.
<b>Changes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have they seen any changes in women EE, or in gender behaviour?</li> <li>• How much do they feel it can be due to the activity of the IP?</li> </ul>	Here we are looking for clues/evidence that there are effect/results from the activities. <i>(this will be difficult for provincial staff to answer as they are far removed from the municipality,</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you aware of lessons learnt from these projects and how they could be integrated in your work?</li> </ul>	<i>but still useful to see if lessons learnt are shared)</i>
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### Key Informant interviews- national /international level

At this level we are mostly interested to get some feedback on context to understand relevance of the WEE programme and possibly hear from other actors about their experience. These KI can be NGOs/INGOs or government actors who may work with UN Women or not. They are selected using the snowballing approach.

**Duration of discussion:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Name:**

**Organisation and role:**

**Date:**

Thematic areas	Pointers
<b>What are the challenges for WEE?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges? What has happened so far that has been particularly useful? (in any initiative you know off)</li> <li>• Is WEE improving and what would be the causes of improvement?</li> <li>• UN Women's approach focusses on capacity building, awareness raising and advocacy at policy level. Is this approach relevant? Effective.</li> </ul>
<b>In the ideal world what would be the best approach to address these challenges?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of alternative approach would you put forward if any? Or what do you think is missing from the UN Women approach</li> </ul>
<b>What are the challenges brought about by federalism?</b>	In planning, managing, coordinating, and learning?

<b>How are projects/programmes learning from each other?</b>	There are many capacity building programmes running and these have been around for many years: what are the main lessons?
<b>For IP only</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the main challenges around working with WEE program in terms of planning/programming/delivery?</li> <li>• What would you like to recommend for the future?</li> </ul>

### Semi-structured interviews UN Women

Here we are focusing on historical background to programme, approach to programming, perspective on project/programme management, data on project management to address the effectiveness question. Also interested in M&E framework and systems.

**Duration of discussion:** 30 - 45 minutes

**Name:**

**Role:**

**Date:**

<b>Thematic areas</b>	<b>Pointers</b>
<b>What is the historical background of this programme?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the challenges? What has happened so far that has been particularly useful? (in any initiative you know off)</li> <li>• Is WEE improving and what would be the causes of improvement?</li> <li>• UN Women's approach focusses on capacity building, awareness raising and advocacy at policy level. Is this approach relevant? Effective.</li> </ul>
<b>What have been the challenges faced by the programme?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges internal to the programme architecture, funding, working relationship with ministry, with partners?</li> <li>• Has federalism created new challenges? Of what kind?</li> </ul>
<b>Programme management; 8 implementing partners for AWEE and FWW</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is that too heavy to manage? Are systems easily aligned?</li> <li>• Is it cost effective to work with so many different service providers?</li> <li>• How does UN Women choose its service providers? (I.e. what criteria?)</li> </ul>

<b>Value for money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are VfM principles of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness inbuilt in the UN Women’s WEE programming?</li> <li>• What are VfM measurement indicators against the key Es? How does UN Women plan to access them?</li> <li>• What value are UN Women generating through WEE? How are those being measured?</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does UN Women learn and share lessons internally and externally on this programme?</li> </ul>

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

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