



COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

NIGERIA

Synthesis Report



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report, and the overall evaluation process, were informed by the participation of more than 132 stakeholders, staff and partners. Without the support and active participation of all these women and men involved in the consultation process, this report would not have been possible.

The evaluation was conducted by the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) and co-led by Messay Tassew, *IES Evaluation Specialist* based in headquarters and Cyuma Mbayiha, *IES Regional Evaluation Specialist* for the West and Central Africa Region. The evaluation team was supported by Rakia Mamman-Simpson (Phd), *Senior National Consultant*, and Sama Khan, *International Consultant*. The evaluation team also benefitted from the insights and overall leadership and guidance of Lisa Sutton, *Director* of the UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS).

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ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
AWLN	African Women Leaders Network
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CO	Country Office
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Group
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DaO	Delivering as One
DPGG	Donor Partner Gender Group
DRF	Development Results Framework
ECES	European Centre for Electoral Support
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ED	Executive Director
EU	European Union
EVAWG	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GTG	Gender Theme Group
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IEAS	Independent Evaluation and Audit Services
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
ILO	International Labour Organization
INEC	The Independent National Electoral Commission
IPCR	Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution
IT	Information Technology
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
NAP	National Action Plan

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OEE	Operational Effectiveness and Efficiency
PP	Programme Partner
RBM	Results Based Management
SAP	State Action Plan
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SN	Strategic Note
SPI	Spotlight Initiative
SSA	Special Service Agreement
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UN WOMEN	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United National Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSDPF	United National Sustainable Development Partnership Framework
VAPP	Violence Against Persons Prohibition
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WEP	Women Economic Principle
WFP	World Food Programme
WOB	Women Owned Business
WPP	Women Political Participation
WPS	Women, Peace and Security



Photo ©UN Women NCO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

NIGERIA

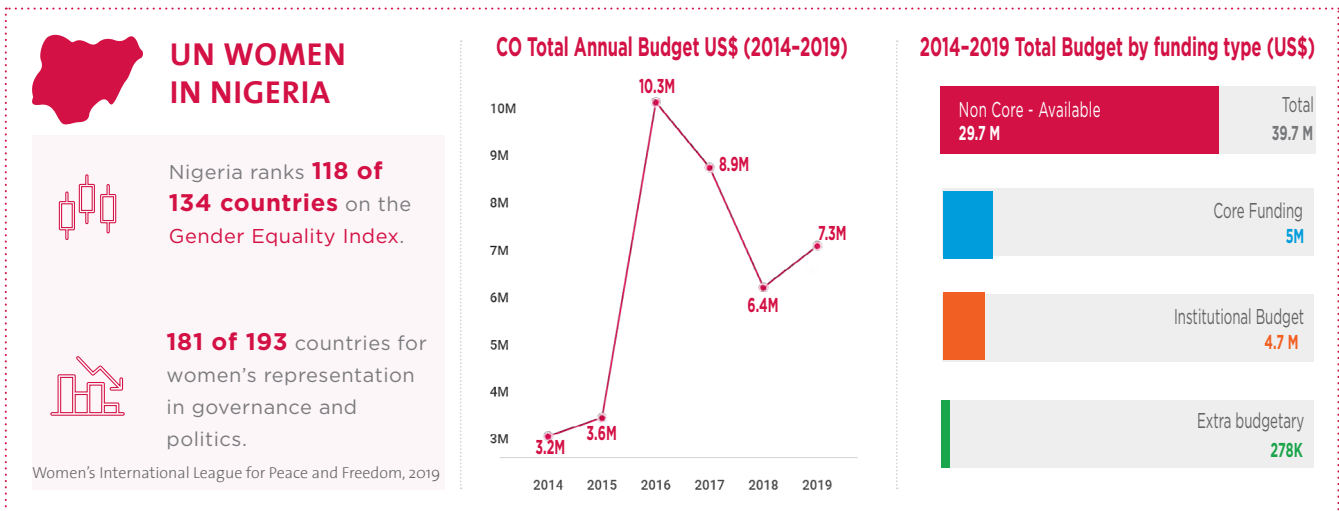
This report presents the key findings and recommendations of the first fully fledged Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) of the UN Women Nigeria Country Office. The scope principally covers two Strategic Note cycles spanning the period 2014–2019.

With an estimated population of 200 million and a growth rate of 3.2 per cent, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa.¹ Nigeria has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 448.10 billion making it the largest economy in the continent.² Nigeria also exerts significant influence on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – a regional political and economic union of fifteen countries located in West Africa with an estimated combined population of over 349 million.

The country currently, ranks 181 of 193 countries on the Gender Equality Index³ for reasons such as poor resource allocation in the economic and social sectors, frequent conflicts, forced displacements and inadequate inclusion of women and girls’ perspectives in policy-making decisions. Other reasons include low representation of women in governance and politics; and inadequate legal framework and limited capacity to support women’s

empowerment and equality efforts; reflecting the strategic importance of Nigeria to UN Women in advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (GEWE).

The UN Women Nigeria Country Office (CO) was established as a fully fledged office in 2012. Focusing on normative, coordination and programmatic interventions, the CO works with a range of partners to transform the gender equality landscape of Nigeria. At the operational level, the CO has particularly focused on four priority intervention areas: (1) women’s leadership and political participation; (2) women’s economic empowerment and resilience; and (3) women’s participation and decision-making in peace-building recovery efforts and humanitarian action; and (4) prevention of violence against women and girls. With estimated budgets of US\$ 25 million and US\$ 21 million, the CO’s 2015–2017 and 2018–2022 Strategic Notes (SNs) outlined the strategic direction and expected results from UN Women’s normative, coordination and operational work in Nigeria. In 2017, US\$ 17,477,425 was mobilized with 21 per cent (US\$ 5,349,183) allocated to core resources and Institutional Budget. As at the time of reporting in 2020, UN Women had mobilized 51 per cent (US\$ 10,737,115) of the total estimated budget for the SN 2018–2022.



EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND INTENDED AUDIENCE

This UN Women Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) assessed the evolution, growth trajectory and effectiveness of two SN cycles, looking at critical aspects of women’s empowerment and gender equality in Nigeria. The CPE had two overarching purposes, first, to help UN Women consolidate learning from what works well and what could be done differently; second, to offer evidence-informed insights to support the mid-term review of the 2018–2020 SN.

The CPE examined the implementation of UN Women’s integrated mandate (over a seven-year period) vis-à-vis its comparative advantage and the synergies among thematic areas, particularly in the humanitarian nexus. This in turn was guided by the analysis of key informant interviews and triangulated through desk reviews, an online survey and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs).

The primary audience for this evaluation includes CO management and personnel; relevant staff in target ministries; relevant Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); donors; target beneficiary communities and groups; UN agencies involved as partners in joint programmes; and UN Women regional offices in Western and Central Africa.

Evaluation methods

The CPE was guided by the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, human rights and gender equality. The evaluation used a theory-based cluster design and a contribution analysis. Multiple streams of evidence and data were collected through an extensive desk review of documentary evidence; key informant interviews; FGDs; and a survey of CO staff and partners. The evaluation team interviewed stakeholders and beneficiaries in the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), Lagos and Maiduguri in the north east part of Nigeria. The CPE used a gender-responsive approach during data collection and analysis of findings.

The data collected were organized under each evaluation question and judgment criteria to establish a trajectory of results and analysis of medium to long-term changes. These analyses were then drawn together to offer the eight key conclusions presented in this report.

DATA COLLECTED FOR THE CPE

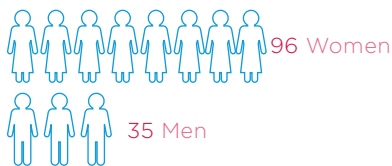
132 Stakeholders interviewed

CO staff, rights holders, Government, private sector, CSOs, donors, and UN agencies



+80 documents reviewed

Annual Work Plans, Evaluations and Audits, Project Documents Reports, Financial Documents



Validation Workshop

held to validate facts and discuss findings with the CO as well as Evaluation Reference Group members



2 Surveys

UN Women CO Staff survey **48%** response rate

Collaborating partners’ survey **52%** response rate



Past & current SN

the entire portfolio of the 2014–2017 SN and the first two years of the 2018–2022 SN

Case Study

- deep-dive case study on WPP and Leadership
- prioritized interventions in the north-eastern part of Nigeria



METHODOLOGY



Multiple streams of evidence and data through desk review, interviews, FGDs, and survey

Gender-responsive approach during data collection and analysis



KEY CONCLUSIONS



The CO was demonstrably adept at evolving its strategic position vis-à-vis gender equality and women's empowerment and changing priorities in the country context.

CONCLUSION 1: UN Women's strategic positioning within Nigeria and the choice of interventions were broadly relevant to GEWE needs; emerging security and humanitarian issues; and the operating context of its thematic areas (both at the national and subnational level). Although the balance of thematic priorities was mainly driven by funding availability, the CO was broadly doing the right things across its portfolio.



The CO's normative work is its strongest comparative advantage.

CONCLUSION 2: The CO recorded significant achievement in its normative mandates, ensuring that Nigeria fulfils its international commitments; supporting the adoption of international instruments; and the enhancement of gender-responsive systems, laws and policies. However, the process of embedding changes in policy at the state and local government level was a daunting task. This proved challenging, particularly as it levied high demand for UN Women resources and staff time.



The CO was viewed as strong and vocal in amplifying the voices of women in various strategic discourses.

CONCLUSION 3: The CO enjoyed a good degree of legitimacy in the gender space. There was near unanimous recognition that the CO's advocacy efforts and closely developed partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders amplified the voices of women in various strategic discourses. These efforts enhanced the strategic positioning of the CO's leadership, which was viewed as strong and vocal in bringing GEWE issues to the forefront. However, given the size of Nigeria's population and the challenges in gender equality, the same cannot necessarily be said for the CO's technical competency and resource capacity. This assessment was occasioned, in part, by a perception of UN Women as poorly resourced and therefore in some areas lacking the in-house technical capacity to generate the highest quality analyses and advisory on emerging GEWE issues (particularly within a wide range of economic, social and environmental dimensions).



Policy level work alone will not stimulate the kind of change required in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION 4: The complexity of Nigeria's three-tiered federalism (the national, state and local governments), and institutional context, positioned multi-level interventions as the most strategic and effective model to stimulate transformative change across the different levels of governance. To a certain

extent, the CO's approach of combining policy-level work with state-level interventions proved effective in consolidating policy gains; building the capacity of gender machinery; and facilitating the adoption and popularization of legislative frameworks in target states. For instance, this approach yielded promising results in Women, Peace and Security (WPS).



The WPS programme had some impactful results at the policy and institutional level and in influencing social norm changes.

CONCLUSION 5: Significant funding combined with a multi-year, multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach enabled UN Women to achieve considerable impact in the WPS programmatic area and allowed replication beyond targeted states. However, a more effective and sustainable outcome would have been achieved with better planning; earlier identification of suitable Programme Partners (PPs); and a risk-based plan organized before the start of project implementation.



Despite the capacity surge, the CO had a highly constrained staffing structure.

CONCLUSION 6: Despite a recent capacity surge and a very committed and dedicated workforce, the CO's current 'staffing structure' remains antithetical to building a stable and technically sound team. In this context, the CO faced difficulties in delivering on its ambitious SN and in playing a strategic role as a liaison with ECOWAS.



Although some internal and external factors were unavoidable, pragmatic and coherent planning could have yielded greater efficiency.

CONCLUSION 7: Although some internal and external factors were unavoidable, pragmatic and coherent planning could have yielded greater efficiency. A more result-oriented approach and strong M&E would have allowed the CO to better showcase its achievements in the gender space.



The fragmented nature of some projects both in terms of funding and duration offset long-term benefits and sustainability.

CONCLUSION 8: At the policy level, the CO helped create an environment that enabled the adoption of gender-friendly legislative frameworks, policies and strategies, some of which could be attributed to the long-standing support of UN Women. However, the sustainability of interventions hinges on several factors, some of which were outside of UN Women's control. UN Women's stretched presence on the ground and operational weaknesses of local partners generated high transaction costs, which had a bearing on the sustainability of UN Women-supported interventions and the CO's convening role within coordination mechanisms.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The context in which this CPE was conducted changed dramatically with the Covid-19 pandemic after the data-collection and analysis of the findings phase. Accordingly, UN Women should aim to implement these recommendations when the country moves to post-crisis recovery. In the meantime, the CO should

strive to incorporate the recommendations into its work to the extent possible given the current context.

These key recommendations also serve to provide a high-level, strategic road map to guide the CO in its next strategic planning cycle.



RECOMMENDATION 1

Intensify engagement in the lead up to **key strategic events in 2020**, such as “A Year of Action” and ensure integration of gender perspectives **in the context of Covid-19 and its ensuing post-pandemic recovery implications**.



RECOMMENDATION 2

Develop a coherent business case and agenda to better formalize the **revitalized partnership with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs** for sustainable impact.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Ensure continuity of **UN Women’s leadership of the Gender Technical Group (GTG)** and other gender coordination mechanisms without interruption to sustain the momentum created.



RECOMMENDATION 4

In consultation with regional and headquarters Human Resources, organize an **HR-mapping exercise** and analysis of functions, and develop a plan to fill major capacity gaps and to build a more stable workforce.



RECOMMENDATION 5

Rethink the strategy towards achieving **inclusive political participation in the 2023 election**.



RECOMMENDATION 6

Enhance **proactive planning/sequencing** and business processes to ensure greater efficiency.



RECOMMENDATION 7

Enhance **monitoring and Results Based Management capabilities** to demonstrate impact.



INTRODUCTION

1. Context of gender equality and women's rights in Nigeria

Overview

With an estimated population of 190 million, Nigeria is **Africa's most populous country**, representing one sixth of the continent's population. The country's projected population in 2030 is 264 million. Despite being a resource-rich country, 50.6 per cent of Nigeria's population, with women and girls being the majority, live in poverty. Nigeria **ranked 118 of 134 countries on the Gender Equality Index**.⁴ Nigeria was among the lowest ranking countries in Africa for women's representation in governance and politics (181 of 193 countries).⁵ The inadequate inclusion of women and girls' perspectives in policy-making decisions; resource allocation; and challenges in economic and social sectors continued to challenge the advancement of gender equality (GE).

With a **national average of only 6.7 per cent of elective and appointive positions held by women**, Nigeria falls significantly short of global (22.5 per cent), continental (23.4 per cent) and subregional (15 per cent) comparisons. Within the government, women currently occupy 6 of 36 ministerial positions (16.2 per cent) and only 17 per cent of senior and decision-making positions. The 2019 election results showed a decline in the number of women in decision-making positions, at both national and state levels. Following the 2019 elections, women occupied 6.4 per cent and 3.5 per cent of the seats in the Senate and House of Representatives, respectively.⁶ This constituted a regression from the previous elections in 2015, where the representation of women in the Senate and House of Representatives was marginally higher at 6.5 per cent and 5.6 per cent, respectively. This occurred despite government interventions including the National Gender Policy (2006, 2016) which recommended a 35 per cent affirmative action target for women in elective political and appointive positions.

Violent conflicts remained a major source of insecurity in Nigeria. According to UN OCHA, in 2019,⁷ 7.1 million people (2.3 million girls, 1.9 million boys, 1.6 million women and 1.3 million men) needed humanitarian assistance in North-East Nigeria as a result of a crisis that is now in its tenth year. About 29 per cent of Internally Displaced Person (IDP) households were headed by single women and girls. Women and girls were affected in various ways, ranging from direct killings and injuries; becoming victims of sexual violence; being separated from their families; being recruited and used as operatives in suicide attacks; suffering extreme distress, egregious physical and psychological abuse; to more subtle, yet persistent and irreversible effects on schooling, health, nutrition, future opportunities and overall well-being.

Women had limited participation in the economy and gainful employment. Women were responsible for up to 80 per cent of food production in Nigeria, yet in many parts of the country, women had no rights to ownership of land as land was owned by the family or community. As such, Nigerian women had not been able to break into or remain competitive in male-dominated industries such as oil and gas, power, banking, telecommunications, engineering and other vital sectors of the economy. Gender-based violence (GBV) was widespread and 30 per cent of women aged 15–49 reported experiences of sexual abuse, with a marked divide between girls and women in urban (33 per cent) and rural (24 per cent) areas. **The Boko Haram insurgency; the rise of violent extremism; and the humanitarian crisis exacerbated the occurrence of GBV in the north-east region.**

National policy and legislation context

The Government of Nigeria had **committed to several global and regional instruments to promote Women's Political Participation (WPP)**. Nigeria was a signatory to a variety of international and regional women's rights conventions, treaties and declarations such as CEDAW; the Child Rights Act (2003); Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995; Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, 2004; and UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 among others. The Government of Nigeria had also adopted progressive laws and policies such as the National Gender Policy (2016); the Violence against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Act (2015); the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill (yet to be adopted); the National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325; and other related resolutions on WPS (2013 and 2017) to create an enabling environment for GEWE. Several state-level GE policies were passed into law and were being implemented at the time of evaluation. As evidenced in the UNSDCF (2018–2022), there was also a **strong commitment on the part of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to support efforts in promoting GEWE in different sectors of Nigerian society**. The government ascribed to GE by committing to 35 per cent representation of women at all levels of government, and the establishment of a national policy on women's affirmative action stipulating 35 per cent inclusion of women in the legislative and executive arms of government.

While there were progressive developments concerning GEWE, the political, economic and security situation provides the context and challenges in which UN Women operated and implemented its integrated mandate in Nigeria during the two SN cycles.



UN WOMEN IN NIGERIA



Nigeria ranked **118 of 134 countries** on the Gender Equality Index in 2019



181 of 193 countries for women's representation in governance and politics



National average of only **6.7 per cent of elective positions** held by women



30 per cent of women aged 15-49 reported experiences of **sexual abuse**

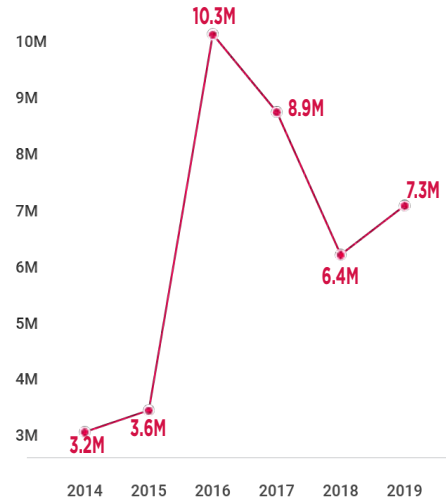


In 2019 **3M girls and 1.6M women** needed humanitarian assistance in North-East Nigeria

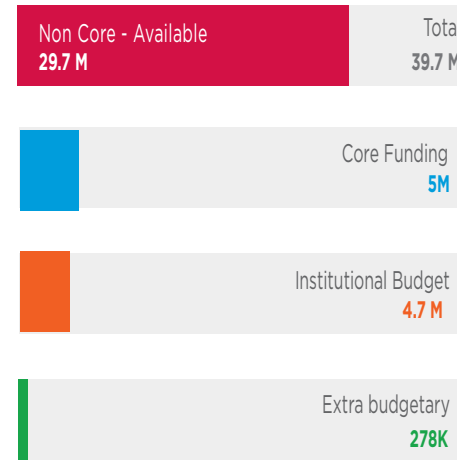


29 per cent of IDP households were headed by single women and girls

CO Total Annual Budget US\$ (2014-2019)



2014-2019 Total Budget by funding type (US\$)



2014-2019 Donor Funds (US\$)

TOTAL	28 M
European Union	16M
Government of Canada	4.82M
Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office Pooled Funding	2.96M
Government of Japan	1.61M
Government of Norway	970K
UNDP	674K
UNAIDS	362K
Peacebuilding Fund	330K
MasterCard	100K
Multi-partners	50K
Fund for Gender Equality	46K
Procter & Gamble	45K
FAO	42K
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	4K

Result areas of UN Women's work in Nigeria

SN 2014-2017

Increased leadership and participation in decision-making of Nigerian women



Poor and marginalized Nigerian women and girls are economically empowered and active partners and players in development



Reduced violence against women and girls in Nigeria and increased access of victims to quality services



Women (particularly in Northern Nigeria) lead and participate in peace, security and humanitarian response at all levels



Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities



SN 2018-2021

Increased leadership and participation in decision-making of Nigerian women



Women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy



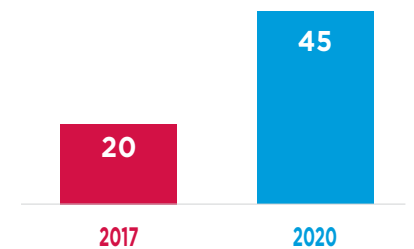
Women and girls contribute and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action



All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence



Number of personnel in UN Women Nigeria Country Office (CO)



2. UN Women in Nigeria: Portfolio Analysis

Nigeria Country Office (CO)

The CO was established as a fully-fledged office in 2012 and conducted its normative, coordination and operational work following its SN as the principal planning instrument. Within the framework of the SNs, the CO developed a Theory of Change (ToC), Development Results Framework (DRF) and Operational Effectiveness and Efficiency (OEE) with performance indicators. The total estimated budget for the first SN was US\$ 25.3 million. For the SN 2014–2017, the CO set an annual resource mobilization target of an average of US\$ 5 million per annum. By the end of 2017, the CO had mobilized US\$ 17.5 million, attaining 88 per cent of its target. The total Institutional Budget, extra-budgetary and core-resources during this period was US\$ 7.1 million accounting for 28 per cent of the total planned budget of the SN 2014–2017.

During the first two years of the current SN (2018–2022), the CO mobilized US\$ 10.7 million, achieving 51 per cent of the target (US\$ 20.8 million).⁸ An increase in funding in 2019 was largely driven by the Spotlight Initiative (SPI) on ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG). Altogether, the CO managed to mobilize US\$ 28.2 million over six years, accounting for 70 per cent of the total resources envisaged. With a slight increase in 2017, core resources remained stable at an annual average of US\$ 859,788.

The CO had a suboffice in Maiduguri, Borno State in North-East Nigeria, with 45 personnel, of which four were stationed in Maiduguri and two in Lagos.

Resource mobilization

As affirmed by a variety of stakeholders, multi-year development funding was limited and there was some donor fatigue after 10 years of protracted conflict in North-East Nigeria. While the CO had recently made good progress in expanding its donor base through joint programmes, the pattern over the last six years revealed a heavy reliance on a few select donors. Taken together, the EU's contribution to the CO during the two SN cycles accounted for 70 per cent of the total funds mobilized, valued at US\$ 18 million. The Women's Engagement in Peace and Security and the SPI on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were the thematic areas that attracted the largest share of resources. The other four largest donors, by order of contribution, were the governments of Japan, Norway and Canada, and the Multi-Partners Trust Fund (Joint Programme Administrative Agent). The contribution of the other 11 donors constituted 10 per cent of resources, indicating that fund mobilization by the CO was principally driven by greater contributions from the top three donors. Albeit on a small scale, the CO also mobilized resources from the private sector.

Result areas

UN Women's work in Nigeria focused on four key result areas: (i) women's leadership and political participation; (ii) women's economic empowerment; (iii) prevention of violence against women and girls; and (iv) women's leadership in peace and security and humanitarian responses, and to a lesser extent on governance and national planning. The EU-funded project "*Promoting Women's Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria*" occupied a central place in the 2014–2017 SN, representing more than 73 per cent of the CO's portfolio.

While there were important similarities between the two SNs, the 2018–2022 SN defined three priority intervention areas: (i) women's leadership, effective engagement and influence of political and governance institutions and processes; (ii) women's economic empowerment and resilience; and (iii) women's abilities to influence conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building recovery efforts and humanitarian action. In 2019, the CO received funding of approximately US\$ 7.2 million from the EU-funded Global Spotlight Initiative supporting initiatives to end VAWG. As a result, the CO revised its 2018–2022 SN to include: (iv) a stand-alone impact area on ending VAWG, which originally was mainstreamed across the other result areas. Accordingly, the 2019 plan delivers results in four impact areas as compared to the three areas originally planned in 2018.

The OEE framework had four output areas, which supported the programmatic framework to enhance the quality of its implementation. Through the OEE, UN Women aimed to achieve efficient UN coordination and strategic partnerships, so that GEWE was not only achieved within UN Women-supported activities but was also leveraged through a large group of stakeholders and mainstreamed throughout their programming.

BACKGROUND TO THE CPE

Scope

The CPE focused on the normative, coordination and programmatic work of the CO. Where possible, the CPE attempted to assess the likelihood of impact across thematic areas.

Date

The evaluation was conducted from December 2019 to May 2020, with a field visit to Nigeria from 27 January to 17 February 2020.

Approach

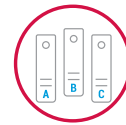
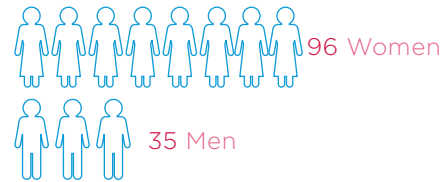
The CPE was conducted in a transparent and participatory manner. Data was collected from a wide range of partners, including CO management and staff, rights holders, partners in the government and private sector, CSOs, donors, UN agencies, and other partners at the national and subnational level.

Methods

The evaluation applied the OECD-DAC criteria and abided by the principles of gender-responsive evaluations; and used 'a utilization-focused lens'. The evaluation used a theory-based cluster design and a contribution analysis.

132 Stakeholders interviewed

CO staff, rights holders, Government, private sector, CSOs, donors, and UN agencies



+80 documents reviewed

Annual Work Plans, Evaluations and Audits, Project Documents Reports, Financial Documents

Validation Workshop

held to validate facts and discuss findings with the CO as well as Evaluation Reference Group members

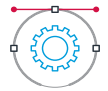


Methodology



Multiple streams of evidence and data through desk review, interviews, FGDs, and survey

Gender-responsive approach during data collection and analysis



2 Surveys

UN Women CO Staff survey	48% response rate
Collaborating partners' survey	52% response rate

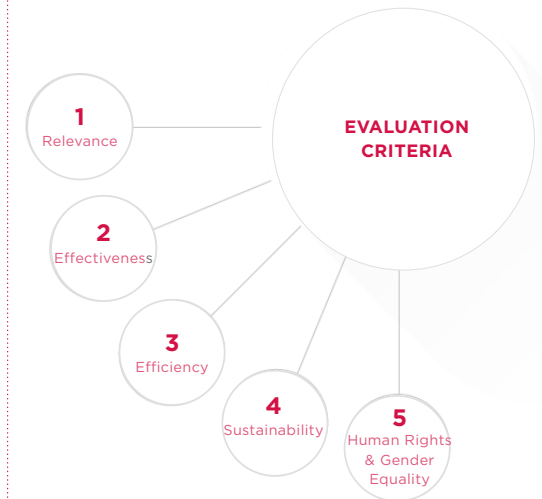


Past & current SN

the entire portfolio of the 2014-2017 SN and the first two years of the 2018-2022 SN

Case Study

- deep-dive case study on WPP and Leadership
- prioritized interventions in the north-eastern part of Nigeria



Contribution Analysis

The four steps to contribution analysis include:



Gather existing evidence the theory of change (that supports or challenges it).



Use the portfolio analysis to assemble and **assess the contribution story** and any challenges to it.



Seek out additional evidence to **fill gaps in the performance story**.



Revise the performance story to determine the probable contribution of UN Women.

3. Evaluation purpose, scope, objectives and methodology

Evaluation purpose and scope

The evaluation aimed to serve a dual and mutually reinforcing purpose of learning and accountability to: (a) consolidate learning about what worked and what could be done differently; and (b) offer evidence-based insights to support the mid-term review of the ongoing SN in 2020. In this context, the CPE assessed how the evolution and growth trajectory of the office (structure, resources, programmes) over the two SN cycles (2014–2017 and 2018–2022) influenced its effectiveness in having a tangible impact on critical aspects of Nigeria’s GEWE agenda.

The CPE covered the entire portfolio of the 2014–2017 SN and the first two years of the 2018–2022 SN. The CPE covered ongoing and completed initiatives at the federal level for the assessment of the CO’s normative and coordination work; and for the assessment of the CO’s programmatic work, prioritized interventions in the north-eastern part of Nigeria, where UN Women had significant investment and presence. The overall analysis moved beyond activity and output-level reporting towards assessing outcome-level changes. The analysis also identified factors facilitating or hindering outcome-level achievements.

In particular, the CPE assessed:

- the level of **efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability** of UN Women’s thematic areas and integrated mandate and explanations for these results (including factors beyond UN Women’s control);
- the level of **synergy, impact and multiplying effect** between the various thematic areas and the integrated mandate, including leveraging opportunities with partners (e.g. joint programmes, contributions to UNDAF [UNSDCF], national capacity, legislative frameworks);
- the level of **organizational effectiveness and efficiency results** including risk mitigation measures, resource stewardship, organizational structure, Results Based Management (RBM) to understand key drivers and how they were considered and managed.

The CPE also aimed to identify and validate **lessons learned, good practices and examples of innovation**, providing actionable recommendations in its engagement with UN system-wide initiatives and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a focus on SDG 5, including the principle of “Leave no one behind”.

Evaluation methods

The evaluation methodology applied the OECD-DAC criteria and abided by the principles of gender-responsive evaluations; and used ‘a utilization-focused lens’ to generate forward-looking and actionable recommendations. A mixed-methods approach utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data was used to triangulate and verify data, increasing the internal reliability and consistency of findings. Most importantly, the CPE used participatory methods, particularly to ensure the inclusion of women-led CSOs, and women, individuals and groups who are vulnerable and/or discriminated against.

The evaluation used a theory-based cluster design and a contribution analysis. The ToC, combined with the DRF and OEE, was used to assess overall portfolio performance, while taking into consideration how organizational characteristics and/or challenges may have contributed to, or limited, the achievement of development results. As the focus was on the assessment of outcomes, the CPE used a ‘contribution analysis’. Based on the ToC, the contribution analysis offered an approach to reduce uncertainty about the contribution the portfolio was making to the observed results through an increased understanding of why the observed results had occurred (or not) and the roles played by the intervention and other internal and external factors.

Mapping of stakeholders, PPs, geographic spread and inventory of projects/activities was performed during the inception phase. Based on the portfolio analysis and the ToCs contained in the implicit SN of 2014–2017 and the explicit SN of 2018–2022, the CPE presented an evaluation matrix, including judgment criteria, data collection and analysis methods (see Annex 1 for evaluation matrix with judgment criteria). Given the complex challenges and underrepresentation of women in positions of power and decision-making, a deep-dive case study on WPP and Leadership was undertaken to further deepen and avail forward-looking recommendations to support the CO with innovative and strategic engagement in the 2023 elections.

Reconstructed ToC underpinning the SNs



Methodological limitations

To the extent possible, the evaluation identified the most significant contributions of the portfolio across the integrated mandate, as perceived by rights holders, duty bearers and other relevant stakeholders. However, given that a wide array of UN Women interventions were implemented through a multitude of partners, the evaluation cannot fully claim causal links between the identified results and the CO portfolio. Further, some of the projects during the SN (2018–2022) were at an early stage of implementation to be able to provide a robust judgment on their success or lack thereof. Therefore, the CPE chose to assess interventions that were advanced or were carried over from the previous SN. Programmes/projects implemented during the previous SN were better suited for an analysis of effectiveness, i.e. their capacity to contribute to outcome results; whereas the ongoing interventions such as the SPI were better suited for an analysis of efficiency, i.e. the quality and modality of implementation.

Another major challenge was the loss of institutional memory due to high staff turnover both within the CO and its key partners in government. This posed a challenge, especially in the assessment of projects completed during the previous SN. However, this was mitigated through extensive consultation and triangulation of evidence from all available sources. Although there were security challenges, the evaluation team managed to meet key stakeholders and beneficiaries in Maiduguri, in addition to the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and Lagos.

Ethical considerations

Participation in the evaluation was voluntary, and verbal consent to participate was sought, particularly from rights holders and duty bearers. All information provided by stakeholders, whether individually, in groups, or via the survey, has been kept strictly confidential and only aggregated data was used for the evaluation report. Except on two occasions where the evaluation team felt it was appropriate to forge learning, no UN Women staff member was present in interviews or FGDs. Overall, the CPE was guided by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.⁹



FINDINGS

RELEVANCE

Choice of interventions were relevant to GEWE needs and policy agenda both at the national and state government level

FINDING 1



UN Women's interventions remained relevant to Nigeria's broad national development priorities and the GEWE policy space. The SNs reflected a good balance of GEWE priorities relevant to the Nigerian context. However, there were some indications of ad hoc/opportunistic operational projects that might not fully align with SN priorities (e.g. anti-trafficking) or be within the CO's competency (economic project involving procuring equipment for grain milling).

UN Women programming was well adapted to the complexity of the governance system and contextually relevant to GEWE needs and policy agenda both at the national and state government levels. The SNs were explicit on key normative instruments underpinning their programmatic activities and result frameworks. The 2018–2022 SN was firmly grounded and guided by the SDGs, particularly SDG 5. The SN placed special credence in leveraging UN Women's comparative advantages (i.e. mandate, long-standing relationships and convening power with civil society) and expertise in GEWE, to strengthen UN efforts, as well as coordination and monitoring of GEWE outcomes within the framework of the UNSDPF (2018–2022).

The CO's programming and priorities were adapted to the complexity of Nigeria's governance system, emerging security issues and the humanitarian context.

For instance, when nearly 300 schoolgirls were abducted in Chibok, UN Women provided integrated assistance in humanitarian settings, including in response to the Chibok girls and their family members in North-Eastern Nigeria. **The consciousness-raising and advocacy role that UN Women played in response to the abduction of the girls, and subsequent policy advocacy on security issues and capacity building in humanitarian action, was widely valued.** The CO supported the humanitarian assistance efforts

and contributed to the re-integration of internally displaced women and girls from the Boko Haram insurgency and other conflicts.

Within the broader peace architecture, **the CO mobilized substantial resources in support of WPS (EUR 10 million from the EU) and played an important role in responding to the security situation by supporting the development and implementation of the first and second UNSCR 1325 NAPs (2013–2016 and 2017–2020); and adoption of State Action Plans (SAPs) and Local Government Actions Plans in the states of Adamawa, Gombe and Plateau.** A similar effort was replicated in two additional states (Benue and Bauchi), with a new flagship project funded by the Government of Norway valued at US\$ 1.7 million.

In the area of WPP, UN Women was a recognized key player, as verified by several stakeholders. The CO used its convening capacity to rally CSOs, donors and UN agencies around the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and key electoral institutions in most of the gender-focused campaigns and mentoring activities for the inclusion of women in politics. After the elections in 2019, UN Women initiated and led the process that mobilized the full involvement of the UNCT and development partners to produce a policy brief that served as an engagement platform on GEWE to inform the priorities for the incoming administration. Using its convening power, UN Women, through a multi-stakeholder partnership, presented the document at the highest level of government in Nigeria.

RELEVANCE

UN Women's normative work is its strongest competitive advantage

FINDING 2



The CO made a tangible contribution in advocating, influencing and supporting the development, enhancement and adoption of a plethora of gender-responsive laws, policies and systems.

UN Women's contributions to and support for the development and enhancement of gender-responsive systems, laws and policies, and the adoption of international instruments along with several advocacies, were widely acknowledged. The most notable contributions to normative frameworks included the National Gender Policy of Nigeria; the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill (GEOB – which had yet to be passed by the National Assembly); the first and second edition of the UNSCR 1325 NAPs (2013–2016 and 2017–2020 respectively) and support for the development and passage of the 2015 Bill for the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) and SAPs. The CO also supported the development of sectoral gender policies, e.g. the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and Nigeria Police Gender Policy; and supported the roll-out of National Gender and HIV Mainstreaming Guidelines and the integration of

gender considerations into national HIV monitoring and evaluation systems.

The CO guided the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs in helping to step up its engagement on national and regional discourse and to ensure that Nigeria fulfils its normative international commitments.

For instance, Nigeria had never defaulted on its reporting to CEDAW.¹⁰ UN Women's role was described as 'pivotal' in the successful mainstreaming of gender dimensions into peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes. Similarly, under the economic recovery programme, the CO was pivotal in seeking the mainstreaming of gender in development and humanitarian contexts.

FINDING 3



Although UN Women's strong leadership and guidance on its normative mandate work were widely acknowledged, adoption of laws and implementation of policy gains at the state and local government level remained a significant challenge.

There was near unanimous recognition among stakeholders of UN Women's normative influence on gender-friendly legislative frameworks and policies. However, this required resources and long-term planning. The three-tiered federal system of government, coupled with the tripartite legal system in Nigeria, further complicated the process of embedding change in policy at the state and local government level.

The process for enacting new legislation in Nigeria was usually lengthy, and frequent demands for revision to existing policies added more complications in the outcome areas of 'policies and laws'. For instance, it took nearly 14 years of consistent and targeted advocacy, technical support and stakeholder mobilization by UNIFEM, UN Women and other UN agencies in collaboration with other development partners to complete the passage of the VAPP bill, which had yet to be adopted in several states. The often complex, male-dominated socio-cultural fabric and social structures in the country made it even more challenging to fast-track gender-friendly legislative frameworks, and their adoption at the subnational level.

Some stakeholders questioned the value of frequent review/revision of laws and policy instruments. **This was partly because, in a country like Nigeria, with strongly entrenched cultural and patriarchal structures, gender-transformative change, particularly of traditional social roles, norms and expectations takes time and requires a long-term programming perspective.** For instance, there had been two editions of NAP on UNSCR 1325 within six years; and at the time of the evaluation preparation was underway to develop the third edition. The National Gender Policy was also being revised. Moreover, gender-responsive

and gender-transformative results do not change so dramatically as to require such frequent revisions. **Focusing on revising law and policy instruments, and not necessarily on their implementation on the ground, diverts attention from making progress on implementation and delivery of results.** However, other stakeholders were of the view that the revision of laws and policies sustained attention on the issues and supported implementation. For example, the first NAP did not integrate emerging peace, security and humanitarian issues, and these were integrated in the second NAP, thereby increasing its relevance and support for its implementation by government and other stakeholders.

The engagement of UN Women at the normative level was highly valued and presents an opportunity for the CO to elevate its profile in the GE space. However, providing CO support in the outcome areas of policies, laws and institutional frameworks to advance GEWE proved challenging, particularly as it levied a high demand on CO resources and staff time.

This paradox perhaps presents an opportunity for UN Women to rethink how it contributes to the vision for advancing GEWE in the Nigerian context. In particular how it balances its role as an "upstream" knowledge-based think tank/organization influencing policy, and "downstream" as a field-based organization implementing programmes in places where women and girl's empowerment is critical.



COORDINATION WITHIN THE UN

UN Women’s visibility extends above and beyond its capacity

FINDING 4



Despite its small size, UN Women was well-represented in key strategic spaces within the UN system in Nigeria. However, stable, high-level technical competency and resource capacity remained an obstacle for the CO to deliver on its coordination mandate on GEWE.

UNCT members and key stakeholders often perceived UN Women leadership as strong, forthcoming, proactive and open for business. Leveraging its leadership in the Gender Theme Working Group, UN Women successfully led UN efforts to mainstream GEWE in the 2018–2022 UNSDPF. The subsequent designation of UN Women as co-lead (along with UNDP) in the UNSDPF in Governance, Human Rights, and Peace and Security pillars, was testament to the Entity’s comparative advantage and its potential to add value. **In concluding that visibility of the CO was greater than its capacity, it is worth noting the CO’s success in securing a seat at the HCT, where the need for gender-responsiveness is urgently needed for humanitarian response.**

The CO successfully organized and coordinated the full involvement of the UNCT in the commemoration of International Women’s Day and several events to advance the GE and women’s human rights agenda. These included the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Towards Women and Girls, International Women’s Day and the HeforShe campaign. **The HeforShe campaign, in particular, was widely acknowledged by key stakeholders and other UN agencies for raising the profile of UN Women; increasing its influence; and helping the CO to secure commitments to GE at the highest**

decision-making structures at the state and national level, and within the UN system.

The CO made good progress in providing guidance on programming and mainstreaming gender into humanitarian policy and programmes (in terms of both programmatic interventions and institutional results). In response to the protracted crisis in North-East Nigeria in particular, the CO worked with many Gender Focal Points in humanitarian spaces and the GenCap (January–July 2018) contributed significant gender content to the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview, as well as the Multi-year Humanitarian Response Plan (2019–2021). However, with increasing evidence of the large GE gaps in humanitarian responses, the CO should seek stronger engagement within the HCT to advance the GE agenda on the ground and its mainstreaming in the design of new initiatives/interventions.

To exercise a stronger positive influence and enhance its position as the logical technical and coordination lead on GE, the CO should reposition itself as a think tank, developing comprehensive capacity for advocacy, analytics and advisories for gender programming and GEWE-related issues. There was a political climate for such analysis to influence policy design and implementation.

FINDING 5



The GTG was still at a nascent stage, albeit moving in the right direction. The challenge for the CO is in ensuring that UN Women’s leadership of the GTG is not interrupted to sustain the momentum created and to ensure that the CO demonstrates the value it brings to effectively monitor implementation of the UNCT’s work on GE and gender mainstreaming.

The Gender Theme Group (GTG) was the main platform used by the CO to leverage the UN’s contribution to advancing GEWE coordination in the country. At the time of evaluation, the GTG was chaired by UN Women’s Deputy Representative in Nigeria, which raised the CO’s profile. As such, there had been a positive development towards strategic collaboration

and planning in the GTG to avoid ad hoc collaborative engagement and enhance alignment with global instruments, such as planning of the UNCT SWAP and GEM. This needs to be sustained, while ensuring focal points in each agency are also kept at sufficient seniority to develop a solid platform and a strong voice across agencies.

The main four routes to fulfilling the CO's coordination mandate include:



1. Shifting from opportunistic one-off events to a more **strategic approach to national GE priorities**



2. Pushing for the timely initiation and completion of the **UNCT gender scorecard**, pivotal to driving commitment and increasing the accountability of agencies on GEWE



3. Ensuring timely implementation of the UNCT scorecard and **the planned start of GTG assessments**



4. Ensuring availability of **sufficient staff resources** to support the role of chair of the GTG



COORDINATION WITHIN THE UN

High-level commitments on gender equality not matched with commensurate and concrete resources

FINDING 6



The widespread consensus on the strategic importance of gender issues and advancing GE had not translated into commensurate or concrete resource commitments.

UN Women's financial and human resources remained small in comparison to the size of the country; development needs; and the complex nature of GEWE in Nigeria. At the time of evaluation, UN Women's envisaged contribution during the UNSDCF five-year cycle was around US\$ 28 million. This amount represented less than 1 per cent of the collective UN financial envelope.

Given its relatively limited financial position vis-à-vis other UN agencies, the CO faced difficulties in maintaining its strategic position and remaining

operationally relevant. The impact of funding that limits the CO's capacity to recruit fixed-term staff had a bearing on the office's stability, technical competency and resource capacity as a whole – essentially hindering the CO in achieving important results through its integrated mandate and strategic liaison role with ECOWAS. These gaps were often attributed to the erosion of institutional memory and technical competency, limiting the CO's capacity to play a more active and uninterrupted role in its technical cohesion, convening role in GEWE coordination mechanisms.



COORDINATION WITHIN THE UN

The joint programme mechanism had been used by the CO to a reasonable degree for facilitating integrated action, coordination and leveraging the different mandates and resources of UN agencies on GEWE

FINDING 7



The CO achieved a measure of success and expanded its joint programme portfolio in the context of the humanitarian–development nexus approach. However, some potential pitfalls – also key determinants of coherence at a programmatic and operational level – were highlighted, such as competition for funding among UN entities. Other risks include taking on ad hoc roles or opportunistic interventions in joint programmes where the CO had less comparative advantage.

The context of the UN system reform drive towards system-wide coherence, spearheaded by the Delivering as One initiative (DaO), brings ample opportunities for collaboration and joint programming in Nigeria. In line with the DaO principle and UN Women's 'spirit of open for business', the CO initiated and/or collaborated on joint programmes with other UN agencies. **In addition to serving as a mechanism to scale up and improve the reach of interventions on GE, including in conflict-ravaged North-East Nigeria, the joint programme mechanism was increasingly used by the CO to expand its resource pool.** For instance, the proportion of the joint programme budget to the total 2019 Annual Work Plan budget was around 35 per cent. With the addition of the significant resources for the SPI, this percentage is likely to increase in 2020.

Joint programmes included Women's Engagement in Peace and Security in Northern Nigeria (with UNICEF funded by the EU); a humanitarian project in partnership with OCHA to engender humanitarian coordination (funded by the Government of Japan); access to coordinated services for women and girls victims of GBV with UNFPA; economic empowerment of women through the acquisition of seeds and equipment, aimed at transforming their productivity with WFP and FAO; gender-sensitive conflict early warning and early response systems in the three target states with UNDP; the SPI on ending violence against women and girls with UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO; and a UN Agriculture Flagship project in partnership with FAO, UNIDO and ILO (the Women's Economic Empowerment through Climate Resilient Agriculture).

During the 2019 election, the CO coordinated the gender component in the electoral process under a joint programme with UNDP. The partnership between

the two agencies was acknowledged a success by key stakeholders. As the CO establishes a firmer footprint on WPP in Nigeria, this partnership represents great potential for future joint gender programmes, particularly in the country's 2023 elections.

The most prominent of the UNCT's joint gender programmes both in terms of programmatic interventions and scale was the UN-EU Spotlight Initiative on ending violence against women and girls.

The Spotlight Initiative (SPI) was an example of large-scale, joint UN GE programming in Nigeria involving UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and UNESCO. **In addition to raising high-level visibility on gender issues, the SPI also extended the reach of UN Women's comparative advantage and opened up partnership opportunities in other sectoral ministries and with other non-traditional partners.** The enhanced visibility created with the SPI should be used to leverage other available resources and similar commitment from other donors to support implementation of multi-year, high impact, inter-agency programmes on GEWE.

Recently, the UNCT identified GE among the five priority areas for a joint programming approach at the country level. The modality of this process – both internal and external – will need to be nurtured and further developed, particularly relating to the specific mandates of the UN agencies in the country. **Overall, various respondents within the UN appreciated UN Women's openness to collaboration and its proactive role in pushing the frontiers for a unified vision on GE among UNCT members.**

 **UN Women enjoyed a good degree of visibility and legitimacy in the gender space. Its contribution to both national and state-level gender machinery was valued**

FINDING 8



UN Women enjoyed a good degree of legitimacy in the gender space. Its contribution to both national and state-level gender institutions was highly valued. UN Women's leadership was viewed as strong and vocal in bringing GEWE issues to the forefront.

The partnership between UN Women and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs successfully positioned the CO as a strategic key partner and the lead agency supporting the government and key stakeholders on GEWE issues, particularly the implementation of international agreements and conventions.

Partnership with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs had improved during the current 2018–2022

SN compared to the former. The new leadership (Minister) and management of the Ministry were ardent supporters of UN Women's mandate. The CO's advocacy efforts and support for capacity training of government counterparts were valued and recognized as instrumental in generating awareness and in the creation of gender desks and units in several Ministry Department Agencies.

The technical assistance and high-level leadership engagement between the CO and the government played an integral role in influencing the decision to upgrade the gender desk into a fully-fledged unit within the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR). While it may be difficult to pinpoint plausible attribution, gender had been mainstreamed (theoretically) in all IPCR directorates and all training executed. However, the gender desks and units had yet to deliver on the objectives of mainstreaming gender with some partners.

Key informants saw UN Women's normative influence in gender-friendly legislative

frameworks, bills and policies; coalition building; and mobilizing voice for women's organizations as a comparative advantage.

However, most key informants believed that UN Women's convening power at the highest level could be further leveraged to stimulate legal reforms on GEWE policies in Nigeria (such as in WPP) and to push for the adoption of international norms and conventions on GE across the different levels of governance structures in the country. Partnership with government gender machinery also needs to be nurtured more effectively.

UN Women enjoyed a good degree of visibility and legitimacy in the gender space, amplifying the voices of women in various strategic discourses

FINDING 9



UN Women demonstrated a clear comparative strength in mobilizing the voice of women through strong partnerships with women-led and women's rights CSOs; mobilizing high-level stakeholders at very short notice; and advocacy on strategic and sensitive GE areas such as GBV, WPP, recovery, peace and security.

The CO enjoyed a favourable relationship with a range of actors in the gender space. Leveraging this credibility allowed UN Women to coalesce a diverse range of women-led and women's rights CSOs and networks around the core GEWE agenda and priorities. UN Women's development partners in Nigeria saw gender issues at the heart of their actions and acknowledged the CO's efforts in amplifying the voices of women in various strategic discourses. High-level delegation visits to Nigeria by the UN Deputy Secretary-General, UN Women Executive Director (ED), Assistant Secretary-General and other technical staff from headquarters enabled the CO to have access to and secure high-level political support both at the federal and target state level.

In providing the secretariat for the Donor Partner Gender Group (DPGG), the CO was strategically positioned at the highest level of coordination on GEWE. The DPGG provided a strategic centre point for coordinating gender activities in Nigeria, connecting and bringing together a diverse spectrum of actors in the gender space. The forum provided a unique platform allowing, among other things, sharing of information and shaping dialogue around GEWE. The CO coordinated a series of international events (International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism, participation in the Commission on the Status of Women, etc.) and some WPP efforts were organized through engagements with the Women's Political Participation Working

Group. These efforts consisted of: (a) providing funds and technical support to women's organizations on electoral and constitutional reforms; (b) building the capacity of female politicians and women in the public sector on leadership and gender analytical skills; and (c) mobilizing women to be active in the political process. Through these efforts, the CO was a critical broker between civil society, government and donors.

Nevertheless, interview respondents mentioned that DPGG meetings were only attended by a few government institutions and UN organizations. Various sources consistently mentioned that the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development actively attended DPGG meetings but tended to delegate lower-level personnel. This implied that the contribution expected from the highest level of the national gender machinery was likely to be limited.

For the group to play a strategic role, members also expected UN Women to step up its engagement beyond the secretariat function. The group was sometimes affected by breaks resulting from change in the CO's focal points. This impacted institutional memory and the continuity of activities, which carries a risk of undermining the influence of UN Women in the gender space. Further, the CO's representation in such a dynamic group required a mix of substantive gender expertise and robust coordination skills.



For reasons of limited resources and constrained staffing structure, it was evident that piecemeal and sequential partnerships will not trigger the full, desired outcome level changes in Nigeria.

FINDING 10



The CO's approach of bringing together a diverse group of existing women's networks yielded success in harnessing and encouraging collective action for the common cause of advancing GEWE in Nigeria. The establishment of the Nigeria Chapter of the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN) with UN Women support provides a good example.

In coordinating the launch of the AWLN, UN Women succeeded in receiving high-level political support from a range of government, development partners and UN officials. This included a recorded call for action by the first lady of Nigeria, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, the UN Deputy Secretary-General, UN Women ED, the UNRC in Nigeria, German Ambassador to Nigeria, AU Country Rep in Nigeria, Vice President of ECOWAS, and Representative of AU Envoy on WPS.

Despite only being launched in July 2019, the AWLN had already made good progress in galvanizing voices to change the current narrative on women's leadership, particularly in light of the 2019 election results, which saw a further decline in women's representation in elected office – from 5.6 per cent to 4 per cent. Moreover, because of the adverse conditions women face in situations of conflict, the AWLN was also structured to serve as a practical instrument to support implementation of UNSCR 1325 (2000) on WPS at country levels.

While the AWLN was a collaborative partnership between UN Women, the AU and the Government of Germany, through its SDG office the Government of Nigeria also provided some funding. This institutional support was key to ensure the functionality of the network in the long term. However, as with other coordination mechanisms, there was a risk that such

momentum may be lost due to the CO's unstable staffing structure.

Interviews with participants reported that the CO engaged with stakeholders through a diversified Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) keeping with the principles of inclusive participation and accountability. The CSAG was made up of 16 persons ranging from CSOs, networks and women-led organizations. The group advised UN Women and also used information from UN Women to support CSOs in the country. **In addition to increased sensitization around GEWE, several stakeholders and partners attested to UN Women's value and the value that the Entity was able to add to their institutions. Some CSOs indicated that partnership with UN Women helped them to establish linkages with other GEWE organizations and networks, and in coordinating and implementing activities especially at the grassroots level.** Others indicated improvement in relationships with associations representing marginalized groups and traditional institutions in the implementation of WPS. One example was the Borno State Women-Led organization and establishment of the national chapter of the AWLN to support women's networks.

Although the partnerships with women-led CSOs proved effective in galvanizing support and bringing gender to the centre stage, gaps in capacity and linkage with government systems need to be strengthened for better and more sustainable outcomes.



UN Women's leadership was viewed as strong and vocal in bringing GEWE issues to the forefront

FINDING 11



The CO obtained good traction through its partnerships with the private sector and explored new avenues for funding with multinational companies. However, promising initiatives were not systematically pursued, compromising and threatening the initial gains and momentum created.

While the limited number of partners consulted does not permit conclusive insight, UN Women enjoyed a good degree of legitimacy among the private sector. The CO produced a private sector strategy with a comprehensive mapping of the landscape of private sector companies supporting GEWE investments and a senior consultant with a private sector engagement portfolio was posted in Lagos. While the scale of funding was very small, UN Women was able to leverage some private sector funds.

In partnership with MasterCard, UN Women supported the Government of Nigeria in providing biometric identity cards to 7,500 women in the state of Kaduna as part of the government's financial inclusion programme. However, limited information was available about the continuity of the initiative and groundwork for scale-up. UN Women was also leading advocacy on promoting gender-responsive procurement as a critical part of the solution for GEWE. In partnership with Procter and Gamble, UN Women supported women entrepreneurs, particularly small-scale suppliers, to access corporate value chains in Kaduna state. Although small in scale, by creating a platform for interaction, the CO managed to bridge the huge divide between women leaders in the private sector and women in the political space. According to anecdotal

evidence, this interaction encouraged some private sector women to stand for political office in the last election. Women entrepreneurs also campaigned for the adoption of the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill with specific provisions on access to land, which is critical for women's economic empowerment, especially in the Nigerian context. The HeforShe campaign was also leveraged to increase awareness of the gaps in women's leadership in the public sector.

However, some initiatives that demonstrated promising traction were not systematically pursued, compromising the initial gains and momentum created. It is therefore critical that the CO revitalize the private sector advisory group it established to continue the momentum of the Affirmative Procurement conference held in September 2019. Overall, the private sector was willing, ready and open to partner with UN Women. A lot could be leveraged from national and multinational companies as part of their corporate social responsibility and philanthropic agenda. A key approach to achieving this would be by supporting companies to adopt the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), and to budget for and invest in social impact projects which advance implementation of SDG 5, as stipulated in the CO's private sector strategy.



EFFECTIVENESS

Policy level work on GEWE alone will not stimulate the kind of change required in Nigeria

FINDING 12



The complexity of Nigeria's three-tiered federalism and institutional context positioned multi-level interventions as the most strategic and effective model to stimulate transformative change across the different levels of governance.

There was near consensus across all stakeholders and donors consulted that policy-level work on GEWE alone will not stimulate the change that is needed in Nigeria. Rather, normative work must go alongside cutting-edge and innovative community-based interventions to drive transformative change in the lives of the most vulnerable women.

UN Women's strategies towards the realization of its mandates and normative frameworks were mainly geared towards advocacy on GEWE, technical support and capacity training of national counterparts in the various ministries (both at the national level and in specific states) along with key stakeholders, particularly those with roles in implementation, monitoring and reporting. While donors were keen to support UN Women, at the same time, they also expressed the need for the CO to have a more judicious mix of

normative and operational interventions for impactful results in areas where women and girls continue to face serious challenges related to the lack of GE. **To a certain extent, the CO's approach of combining policy-level work with state-level interventions proved effective in consolidating policy gains; building the capacity of gender machinery; and facilitated adoption and popularization of legislative frameworks in target states. For instance, this approach yielded promising results in WPS.**

Nonetheless, for greater and more sustainable impact, UN Women should move away from the traditional approach (e.g. workshops, meetings), to one that is more catalytic in encouraging change in cultural norms. In addition, the CO could benefit from approaching new innovative intervention ideas as pilot projects to study what works in terms of scaling-up and instil a culture of monitoring and evaluation (M&E), self-evaluation, learning and knowledge management in the office.



EFFECTIVENESS

The WPS programme resulted in some impactful results at policy and institutional level, and in influencing social norm changes at the grassroots level

FINDING 13



Significant funding combined with a multi-year, multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach enabled UN Women to achieve considerable impact in the WPS space and allowed replication beyond targeted states. However, the programme outcome was compromised by the trade-off between delivery and impact.

The WPS programme had some impactful results at both policy and institutional levels and in terms of influencing social norm changes at the grassroots level.

The WPS programme proved to be a model that worked well in terms of strengthening institutional capacity (both formal and traditional). It was also successful in challenging social norms, particularly those that limit opportunities for women's participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. At the policy level, the CO made a valuable contribution to the design and development of the first and second NAPs on UNSCR 1325.

The milestones recorded under the WPS programme showed a significant contribution in creating an enabling environment for implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the national level. It also allowed programme replication beyond the targeted states. In particular, the CO supported implementation of UNSCR 1325 at national level and in the three selected states of Northern Nigeria (Adamawa, Plateau and Gombe). The peace architecture of the target states was successfully reviewed from a gender and human rights perspective; gaps were identified; and recommendations for policy and programmatic interventions were defined.

Some of the WPS programme's achievements were unprecedented. For instance, despite patriarchal structures in many parts of Northern Nigeria, the WPS programme was successful in bringing the voices of women into the decision-making arena where they had been virtually absent. At the time of the evaluation, a significant number of women were already participating as members and/or advisers

in traditional councils, and engaging in strategic advice and decision-making in the northern states of Adamawa, Gombe and Plateau. The WPS programme also achieved a major success in terms of bringing to the fore male champions and contributing to strengthening institutions by advocating for increased women's representation in security institutions. However, programme outcomes were compromised by the trade-off between delivery and impact.

Although the WPS project faced a multitude of internal and external challenges, a number of factors contributed to its success:

1. **considerable investment of resources** and multi-year programming, and **collaboration with other UN agencies** such as UNICEF;
2. the **synergy with national priorities** and effective **multisectoral partnerships across a wide range of government**, Ministry Department Agencies, security agencies, traditional and religious institutions, CSOs and women's groups/networks;
3. the **participatory bottom-up planning** and carefully designed small grants mechanisms that reached Community Based Organizations (CBOs); and
4. the **use of a strategic and participatory approach in project design and implementation with stakeholders and target beneficiaries in the three target states.**

Furthermore, gains from the EU project informed a new flagship WPS project in two additional states (Bauchi and Benue) with funding from the Government of Norway. While the project encountered some initial delays, progress in the development



EFFECTIVENESS

UN Women succeeded in rallying a multitude of stakeholders around gender-focused campaigns and mentoring activities for the equal inclusion of women in politics. However, interventions had not yet yielded tangible outcome level results

FINDING 14



The CO's involvement in the 2015 and 2019 elections was favourably recognized as bolstering the engagement of various actors in most of the gender-focused campaigns and interventions for equal inclusion of women in politics. Nonetheless, the CO's interventions had not yet yielded tangible results.

The last national elections in 2019 did not yield a significant representation of women in elected positions. However, the elections did witness landmark participation by women as election observers/monitors, voters, aspirants and candidates standing for election. In this process, UN Women was a recognized key player as verified by several stakeholders.

During the last two elections (2015 and 2019), the CO used its convening capacity to rally a multitude of stakeholders around the Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs and key electoral institutions in most of its gender-focused campaigns and mentoring activities promoting equal inclusion of women in politics. To implement its numerous training and mobilization outputs, the CO deployed its engagement capacities to involve dynamic network of CSOs and collaborated with UN sister agencies, particularly UNDP.

Resources received from the Basket Fund managed by UNDP in 2015 were rapidly used by the CO to convene women's organizations around elections. The joint programme in particular zeroed in on the Women Situation Room, which sought to mitigate electoral violence through creating an early warning and early response mechanism. Furthermore, the CO supported a series of capacity development training sessions with a focus on supporting women leaders to acquire knowledge and skills on election processes, political parties' structures and advocacy for their improved representation. All-female election observer teams were also deployed in states considered hotspots during general elections.

In addition to bringing the voice of women to the centre stage, the CO made a significant contribution in advocating for the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill and a National Policy on affirmative action which stipulated 35 per cent inclusion of women in the legislative and executive arms of government. This policy was achieved through a strong partnership with the INEC, Federal Ministry of Women's Affairs, National Centre for Women Development, Nigeria Women

Trust Fund, the Women Political Empowerment Office and a wide range of women-based CSOs.

Vibrant campaigns, targeted capacity building combined with legislative reforms, and electoral monitoring through the Situation Rooms demonstrated that the CO had learned valuable lessons from its 2015 experience. Albeit small in scale, anecdotal evidence showed that the CO's targeted interventions yielded positive results. Intensive sensitization and capacity building conducted in two states by UN Women under the Fund for Gender Equality programme played a key role in boosting women's participation in the electoral process in Ekiti and Osun states. Three women were elected chair of three Local Government Administrations and 11 women were appointed in the South East Nigeria. For instance, Osun elections recorded about 73 per cent of female voters in the 2015 election.

Partnerships with male legislators were a major factor in the success of campaigns related to legal reforms. Another interesting practice worth emulating elsewhere was UN Women's facilitation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the national parliament and Institute for Legislative Studies to further advance gender-sensitive legal reforms. In terms of the "Leave No One Behind" principle, CO efforts under the WPS programme clearly showed support for vulnerable women's representation especially women with disabilities.

UN Women's coordination work was visible in its ability to mobilize campaigns attended by thousands of activists in a relatively short period of time. This convening power was also visible in the National Post-Elections Conference which was co-organized by UN Women, ECES, IFES and NDI. The partners collectively raised US\$ 30,000 for the conference in June 2019, which represented a clear instance of consultative programming and was attended by 158 people from different parts of Nigeria to discuss and agree on a strategic way forward after the disappointingly low number of seats obtained by women in the election.

Although the election outcome in terms of the representation of women elected to office (representing a regression from previous elections) is a discouraging finding, it also justifies the need for UN Women’s continued and increased engagement in the WPP and leadership space. This offers an opportunity for UN Women to have a more visible and tangible role in better positioning and shaping the national discourse on WPP during the next election in 2023.

However, the evaluation survey observed that a number of activities needed to be consistent across the various levels of governments and more frequent to translate into tangible change. More could have been achieved if the WPP programme had worked in tandem with its WPS counterparts. The potential for synergies between both areas of work is high.

For instance, as a result of the CO’s WPS advocacy, women were appointed to traditional councils in target states (Adamawa, Gombe and Plateau). This development could have been used as momentum to further advance WPP at local government and state levels beyond conflict resolution engagement in strategic peacebuilding. For this to happen, deliberate collaboration needs to be established between WPP programme staff and their counterparts in the WPS space.

In summary, the WPP programme achieved a great deal with only one programme specialist and a junior programme analyst (who joined the unit in late 2019). An international consultant was hired a few months before the 2019 national elections and left at the end of 2019 having also provided support in the lead up to the Bayelsa and Kogi state governorship elections in November 2019. A new personnel had been hired in 2020 as the CO understood the consequences of relying on a single individual to achieve WPP outcomes.



EFFECTIVENESS

The UN-EU Spotlight Initiative on EVAWG was the most prominent joint gender programme in the country both in terms of programmatic interventions and scale

FINDING 15



In addition to the relatively high level of resources, the Spotlight Initiative (SPI) was considered a high-stake programme and a litmus test for an integrated and joined-up model to accelerate change on EVAWG in Nigeria. However, it was too early to make any robust judgment on the success of the SPI, and it will take time to witness concrete changes in legislative, institutional and social norms.

UN Women was the highest recipient of the SPI in Nigeria, accounting for 28 per cent of the total US\$ 25 million funding. The SPI dwarfs the rest of the CO’s portfolio in terms of its size, presenting a significant percentage of the resource envelope during the first two years of the 2018–2022 SN. Similar to the WPS programme, the SPI represents a further affirmation that the EU remains a supporter of the CO. This increase in financing led the CO to revise its 2018–2022 SN to include a stand-alone impact area on EVAWG, which had originally been mainstreamed across other result areas.

Since its launch in January 2019, progress on the SPI had been mixed. After a late and slow start, the foundations were laid and the SPI seemed to be on track. Despite being at a very nascent stage, the CO had implemented several important activities with some emerging results. **The SPI created optimism among participating recipient UN organizations and was serving as a conduit for more cohesive, integrated and multisectoral approaches to EVAWG in Nigeria.**

While the full UN Women SPI team took time to assemble, UN Women’s role as a technical coherence co-lead was positively recognized among SPI focal points in other agencies. Interviews also revealed strong natural complementarities between UN Women and UNFPA, resulting in good collaboration through co-financing activities (e.g. the Survival Summit in Lagos as part of activities to commemorate 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence).

Some signs of progress were also emerging in terms of the CO’s ability to leverage its long-standing partnerships with women-led CSOs, further pushing VAWG onto the national agenda. A good example of this was the CO’s engagement in creating awareness and supporting efforts for the eventual passage of “The Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal of Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Educational Institutions Bill, 2019” where UN Women effectively used campaigns such as the Survivor Summit, HeForShe and the 16 Days of Activism.

In addition to gaining high-level visibility on gender issues, the Spotlight initiative also extended UN Women’s comparative advantage and opened up partnership opportunities into sectoral ministries and a wide range of traditional and non-traditional partners.

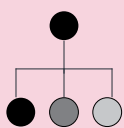
As affirmed during the evaluation team’s interviews in Lagos, the successful launch of the HeforShe campaign in Lagos secured a large turnout and bold commitments from the Governor and other high-level officials. Such a response in Lagos, being the business capital of Nigeria, was a major win for UN Women, which could be replicated in other states.



EFFECTIVENESS

The success of UN Women is key for the overall success of the SPI initiative in Nigeria

FINDING 16



While the CO was leading three of the six SPI streams (laws and policies, institutions and women’s movement), it also had a stake in the remaining pillars. As one focal point stated, “the success of UN Women is key for the overall success of the SPI initiative in Nigeria”. This was connected to the CO’s share of SPI resources and its co-lead role in ensuring technical coherence.

While promising results had started to emerge, the SPI faced internal and external operational and business process challenges particularly during the inception phase. Navigating the complex coordination architecture and a new way of working among the recipient UN organizations necessitated a steep learning curve. There was a consequent hiatus in the selection of partners; differences on the methodology for the baseline assessment; and slow recruitment of required personnel. The joint expression of interest led to a protracted process for the selection of PPs. Further, the SPI coincided with the year of transition in Nigeria after the 2019 election, which called for an extra level of commitment to engage and re-engage with government partners.

Many focal points felt co-location of all recipient UN organizations in the One UN house was key for better coordination. For this to be realized, there should be some arrangement for the UN Women SPI team to return to the UN house. As the collective delivery of recipient UN organizations was a prerequisite for the release of a subsequent tranche of funding, UN Women needed to accelerate its programme implementation. Such commitment needs to be translated into agreements with PPs. For example, UNFPA reached a reasonably good milestone and devised creative ways of continuing activities by working with financially viable NGOs that could pre-finance activities before the second tranche of funding from the EU arrived.

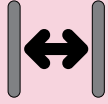
Ensuring coherence both with the recipient UN organizations and partners (especially CSOs) needs to be intensified. The sharing of information in a timely manner and allowing other agencies input into the planning of activities was mentioned by some respondents as key for the CO to discharge its technical coherence role. As SPI implementation progresses, the CO should identify, package and disseminate stories and lessons from the field. Successful media engagements such as the British Broadcasting Corporation’s Africa documentary: ‘Sex for grades’: undercover sexual exploitation in tertiary institutions could be emulated for increased media engagement and to amplify efforts to end VAWG both within universities and the wider public.

While the SPI successfully utilized campaigns and events such as the 16 Days of Activism, HeforShe and the Survivor Summit, sustained follow-up, coordination and capacity-building efforts particularly for grassroots organizations is required to ensure enduring and transformative results. Increased involvement of key government partners (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and state Ministries of Women Affairs) is key to gain political support for the successful implementation of the SPI, which was emphasized in interviews with government partners. The SPI’s unique contributions could then be effectively leveraged to achieve better results in addressing GBV.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

WPS was the most successful programme in terms of influencing the structural and traditional barriers to women’s participation in decision-making



UN Women catalysed and contributed towards GEWE through influencing wider laws and policies; strengthening institutions and systems; and building strategic partnerships to deliver results for girls, women and other disadvantaged groups. However, the limited scale of CO interventions especially in the area of livelihoods/ economic empowerment presents a risk of limited impact to large-scale, transformative change.

UN Women’s SNs reflected a balance of GEWE priorities. The 2018–2022 SN in particular anchored its programming in the principle of “Leave No One Behind” explicitly targeting the most vulnerable women. UN Women contributed to gender-friendly legislative frameworks, policies and laws. Across all thematic areas, the CO effectively mobilized a wide and diverse range of CSOs, networks, grassroots women-led CBOs, traditional chiefs, religious leaders, and men and boys as agents of change to raise awareness and influence negative social norms and traditional values.

The HeforShe campaign stood out as an effective vehicle in securing a commitment from male champions across social, political, economic and cultural spectrums of society (from high-level government officials, legislators, parliamentarians, the private sector, and formal and traditional council leaders).

Albeit small in scale, vulnerable women such as women farmers, vulnerable IDPs and returnees, and rescued/released Chibok girls were able to access a wide range of livelihood/income generation services and resources. For instance, in North-Eastern Nigeria, 2,000 female-headed households (16,000 people) benefitted from income generation activities and were able to generate an income of Naira 10,000 to 20,000 a month, compared to the average income of Naira 7,478 a month in Adamawa State.¹¹ In Borno State, vulnerable women benefitted from rice production, where rice milling machines were handed over to four local government areas. **However, a critical mass of interventions that could trigger transformative change as stipulated in the SN was not always evident “Women and girls have strengthened agency and voice to promote an equitable, violence-free, just and resilient society”. Little evidence was available showing tangible success in terms of women’s access to land and control over resources.**

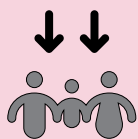
Under the Women’s Political Empowerment and Leadership programme, the CO contributed to amplifying women’s voices and promoted the participation of women in electoral processes. Partnerships with male legislators were a major factor of success in campaigns related to legal reforms. The CO’s efforts under the WPS programme clearly showed support for women with disabilities and vulnerable women’s representation in IDP decision-making leadership.

However, many barriers still remained to women’s advancement in leadership and decision-making. The hard-won successes for women to vote and participate, both as aspirants and candidates were rolled back both in the upper and lower houses of parliament in the 2019 election.¹² The situation at the state level was worse, with no female governors in any of the 36 states. **However, it should be noted that addressing the root causes of the exclusion and under-representation of women in mainstream politics and political processes in a country as complex, diverse and patriarchal as Nigeria is neither easy, quick or the responsibility of UN Women alone and requires multi-stakeholder engagement.**

In addition to increased women’s engagement in strategic peacebuilding and conflict resolution processes, the WPS programme demonstrated promising results in deconstructing localized forms of patriarchy and contributed to the appointment of women in traditional councils. These traditional institutions are significant structures in Nigeria that influence decision-making in formal and informal sectors including peace and security issues. Therefore, this was an unusual development especially in northern Nigeria where patriarchy was deeply entrenched within traditional institutions. Promising approaches were also evident in upstream activities. At the policy level, localized versions of NAPs in three targeted states (Adamawa, Plateau and Gombe) were translated into sign and local languages and braille for the visually impaired, encouraging an inclusive approach, and ‘leaving no one behind’, especially vulnerable groups.

The office structure was not conducive for a stable and technically strong CO

FINDING 18



While there were many committed and dedicated individuals working in the CO, the 'staffing structure' remained antithetical to building a stable and technically sound team. In this context, the CO faced difficulties in delivering on its ambitious SN and in playing a strategic role as a liaison with ECOWAS.

On a positive note, the CO's size and budget had increased significantly, in particular with a recent surge in capacity. Within the last three years, the CO doubled in size from 20 to 45 personnel. **The CO also used a range of approaches to address its staffing deficit and to strengthen its in-house capacity especially as part of the ongoing SN 2018–2022**, including leveraging non-core resources to add fixed-term appointment posts. The CO's decision to appoint senior consultants to drive core functions enabled the CO to deliver important results across its composite mandate spanning normative, coordination and operational aspects. **However, a heavy reliance on consultants and other short-term personnel to drive important work increases risks to consistency and stability in delivery, and can also create a parallel structure of personnel who do not have recourse to the same protections and benefits as staff members. This can increase the risk of an unhealthy working environment and challenges to team cohesion.**

As a consequence of limited funding and reliance on short-term donor funding, about 50–60 per cent of the CO's workforce was predominantly individuals on short-term consultancy contracts, e.g. SSA and service contractors, UN volunteers and interns. The majority (two-thirds) of the workforce had been with the CO for less than a year.

This structure exposed the CO to a high turnover of staff. In particular, most thematic leads may have incentives to leave or join other agencies with the offer of a more stable position. As mentioned by several CO staff and partners interviewed, this situation created

disruption to activities; lack of continuity; and high levels of administration costs to recruit and offboard individuals. While the leadership post had been stable during the 2018–2022 SN, the long recruitment process during the previous SN had weakened the CO's leadership.

Furthermore, the recent capacity surge was not commensurate with operational capacity. The Operations section had remained the same size in terms of HR capacity since 2014, despite the CO's budget and size having significantly grown. In line with the internal control framework, core HR and procurement functions such as access and approval in Atlas cannot be delegated fully to personnel with SSAs. Use of short-term personnel also represented lost investment as staff are trained (in systems and processes) and then leave. The issue related to a lack of secure funding (funding for two years is required for a fixed-term post). The operations manager post was paid from core-resources, significantly diminishing the already small envelope available to the CO, which could have been deployed to strengthen in-house programme management, M&E and communication/knowledge management capacities.

Such practices, coupled with the fragile staffing structure further impeded the CO's ability to build a technically stable team. The loss of institutional memory, staff attrition and high-turnover rates were recurring themes raised by a significant number of key informants. Institutional gaps were often attributed to the erosion of institutional memory.

Addressing limitations in coherent planning could have helped the CO to achieve more

FINDING 19



A mix of challenges in effective planning, internal business processes and inadequate risk management to some extent affected efficiency.

Building on lessons from the previous SN, the improvements made by the CO in programme planning (including managing PPs) were noteworthy. A certain degree of cohesion was attained during the preparation of SNs and Annual Work Plans. Some interviewees regarded programme meetings as providing the avenue to review and foster cross-thematic cooperation. Field visits were used to support multiple thematic areas. The ability of the CO to implement projects within a short period was appreciated.

The CO had no qualified audit in the past. While this helped to achieve a degree of cohesion in the current SN, coherent programming and synergy across priority thematic areas was still not at the required level.

While some internal and external factors were unavoidable, an apparent lack of realistic and proactive planning/sequencing affected the efficiency of the CO. This was manifested in delays in the recruitment of project staff and a slow and lengthy process for identifying and concluding agreements with PPs. Some processes could be started ahead of time, with adequate risk management provisions (e.g. indicating that selection is subject to successful receipt of project funding, or by establishing rosters of expert PPs). Even when NGOs are engaged, they in turn might also need time to hire/assemble their own project team.

In this context, some programmes reportedly experienced start-up delays, which led to rapid adjustment

of the mode of delivery and no-cost extensions. In some cases, this led to low delivery. For instance, the SN delivery rate in 2017 was 79 per cent, in 2018 88 per cent and 69 per cent in 2019. While the late start of the SPI was partly responsible for these results in 2019, issues of strategic programme planning and delays in the selection of PPs and staff were cited as partly responsible for low delivery.

The CO's application of UN Women's internal business processes were reported as slowing down implementation and undermining efficiency. For instance, all partners are required to submit a full set of invoices and supporting documentation for the liquidation of funds. This was understood as a functional mechanism to manage the inherent risk of fraud and misuse of funds. Another example was the requirement for a micro assessment of government PPs. Externally, Nigeria operated with a Treasury Single Account (TSA). As a result, UN Women required state governments to open a dedicated account for new projects. For joint programmes, such as the SPI, this presented unique and cumbersome operational challenges and apparently resulted in delays in the release of funds to government partners.

External impacts such as insecurity, protracted conflict, general elections and sudden changes in the leadership and management structure of Ministry Department Agencies all had a bearing on reduced efficiency.

EFFICIENCY

Efficiency implications linked to effectiveness and sustainability of projects in North-East Nigeria

FINDING 20



While the WPS programme achieved significant results, a more effective and sustainable outcome could have been achieved with better planning.

This observation was also echoed in the final evaluation of the WPS programme commissioned by the EU in 2018, which found: (a) smaller CBOs had limited programme management and technical capacity to implement WPS interventions in a complex operational context; (b) limited capacity of PPs required additional M&E reporting and financial management support by the CO; (c) although the Direct Payment Modality (DIM) for the WPS project offered the CO the flexibility to execute the programme with a high degree of success, transaction costs were particularly high due to the process of validating invoices and supporting documents from multiple CBOs; and (d) in a context where the CO had a limited foothold in North-East Nigeria, an extra level of operational presence and resources were required.

To address these issues and to ensure that a more effective implementation plan was put in place, the **CO took several concrete steps, which included a change in implementation modalities and replacement of PPs. Smaller WPS PPs with little absorptive capacities were replaced with larger partners with more developed absorptive capacity to deliver and provide timely accountability, reducing the number of PPs from 12 to 4.** At the same time, a significant proportion of the funds was disbursed within one year, with the attendant implication of a trade-off between quality assurance and opportunity for better management of the resources.

All these changes led to the disruption of several activities at advanced stages of programme implementation and key milestones. On the other hand, the changes also helped with cost-saving, for instance, the CO capitalized on economies of scale consolidated in the procurement process for all general supplies.

Unlike other agencies, UN Women did not have a strong field presence outside of the capital and adequate structure to respond to deep-seated GE gaps on the ground. The operating model constituted a suboffice in Maiduguri that served the states within the same north-eastern geopolitical zone, providing the CO with a space in the humanitarian landscape. However, UN Women's footprint and presence were small compared to the existing humanitarian and development needs. At the time of the evaluation, the sustainability and capacity of the suboffice to deliver was highly contingent on donor funding and the office was not adequately equipped with the apparatus

needed to work in conflict and fragile situations. For example, at the time of the data collection phase of the CPE, the suboffice was without an armoured vehicle or a dedicated security focal point. An armoured vehicle was later procured through new funds received from Germany.

Moving forward, such complex operations must be carefully calibrated to fit the political and operational context. A risk-based plan should be put in place to better gauge risks for delayed start-up of projects, slow delivery and limitations in the capacity of CBOs to deliver. Good planning should be undertaken to avoid scenarios where activities are not completed and organizations are brought in towards the end of a project. Although the Maiduguri office operated on a small scale with limited staff, there was a need for the CO to ensure that appropriate security arrangements were in place, not only for those working in-station but also for staff visiting on official purposes.



EFFICIENCY: Results Based Management (RBM)

A more result-oriented approach and strong M&E would have allowed UN Women to showcase its achievements in the gender space

FINDING 21



The CO conducted an impressive series of quality research and baseline surveys. In the absence of a dedicated staff member overseeing M&E activities, M&E remained a challenging area for the CO.

The CO generated key analysis, surveys and research covering a wide spectrum of its portfolio on GEWE during the two SN cycles.¹³ The extensive desk review carried out by the evaluation team showed a reasonably good degree of utility. For instance, research on the humanitarian situation in Nigeria integrated gender and the challenges faced by women and girls in the north-east of the country, therefore the gender dimension of the crisis was critical to the policy dialogue. This resulted in the Government of Nigeria making gender central to the 2018 Humanitarian Appeal. The needs assessment of the affected women and girls in Chibok and its environs was used to devise a comprehensive support package aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of violation as a result of the insurgency in North-East Nigeria.

Interviews with some stakeholders showed UN Women commissioned studies being leveraged by partners. The baseline studies on WPS helped the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) articulate its understanding of gaps where there was a need for more engagement, as well as how it engaged with women at the local level in conflict settings. The review of the state peace architecture from a gender and human rights perspective (UNDP, West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP) and IPCR), facilitated the conduct of a needs assessment of the Early

Warning and Early Response System in three target states. The "Gender and Sustainable Agriculture in Borno State: "Exploring Evidence For Inclusive Programmes and Policies For Food Security" was used to design/revise gender training modules for CSOs, agricultural extension workers, government institutions, traditional and religious rulers, and women's groups. The key findings from the gender assessment were shared, and evidence used, to justify and advocate for more inclusive and gender-responsive practices in agriculture and food security programmes in the state of Borno.

However, baseline surveys were generally not followed by mid-line or end-line surveys which limited the opportunity to capture changes over time and help to identify and demonstrate impact (or lack thereof). These studies were not always conducted promptly due to delays in the commencement of projects, recruitment of staff, and other internal and external factors. This presented a missed opportunity and undermined their value for money as such data collection activities are costly. Moving forward, the CO could further leverage and use these studies as a powerful monitoring and advocacy tools to transition to a more result-oriented approach. This would allow UN Women to showcase its achievements and impact on GEWE.

FINDING 22



In the absence of a dedicated staff member driving M&E activities, the CO had yet to develop a functional results-based and knowledge management system to capture and demonstrate results, as well as to ensure timely course correction as needed.

The CO had taken various concrete steps to improve monitoring and its results-based culture. More importantly, the CO had seriously absorbed and acted on lessons to improve its programming and adapting strategies. This was demonstrated in its SNs, Annual Work Plans and Annual Reports. The CO used back to the office reports for documenting monitoring missions, which the evaluation team reviewed and found to be adequate. However, a need for stronger M&E capacity was expressed by both internal and external stakeholders. This was also a recommendation in the 2018 CO audit report by the UN Women Internal Audit Service. The M&E position had been vacant but, cognizant of its key role, the CO had finalized the recruitment process near the end of the evaluation. Linked to the staffing structure, a majority of M&E activity were conducted at the project level. This resulted in data fragmentation and undermined cross-thematic synergies.

Communication and knowledge management

Connected to monitoring is communications and knowledge management. Communication forms an integral part of the CO's interventions be it advocacy, normative, coordination or programmatic interventions. **Different streams of evidence suggested that the CO used communication (print media, digital media and social media) as a key tool to expand its stakeholder outreach and to amplify the gender agenda. However, in the absence of a communication/knowledge management strategy and adequate planning, requests from the different thematic teams were often ad hoc and sometimes last-minute – both of which had cost and quality implications.** The CO had recently appointed two staff members for

communication-related activities. While this was an important step, the budget for the communication/knowledge management function was tied to project funds.

Given its high investment, the CO should seek to further monitor the wider efficacy and impact of its communications, campaigns, advocacy and network-building activities on changing behaviours and norms. External stakeholders also expressed a need for the CO to manage, harness and communicate its wealth of knowledge, including the contributions it had made and the results achieved through partnerships. This is of high value to the CO as its ability to mobilize resources depends largely on the results achieved and its ability to communicate its successes.

Capacity development training

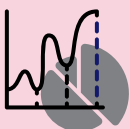
The CO conducted a great deal of training throughout the two SN periods and across all thematic areas. The nature of the training varied thematically and from stakeholder to stakeholder. Given the diverse and vast nature of the training, it was unclear how the impact of the training was being documented and assessed. While CO staff alluded to the use of pre and post-tests, a system to assess the effectiveness of training was not evident. The CO should review its investment in training from a cost-benefit perspective including the involvement of its personnel in implementing such training vis-à-vis other strategic matters/priorities. Due to the importance of training for the CO as its mode of business, it is imperative that the CO re-assess the way the training is being delivered. Depending on the content, the CO may consider outsourcing some training to academic institutions, while still assuming the responsibility for the quality of content, delivery, impact and oversight.



SUSTAINABILITY

Large scale and long-term programmatic approaches are required to ensure the sustainability of actions and benefits

FINDING 23



At the policy level, the CO helped create an environment that enabled the adoption of gender-friendly legislative frameworks, policies and strategies, some of which could be attributed to the long-standing support of UN Women. Nonetheless, the sustainability of interventions hinges on several factors, some of which were outside UN Women's control.

Overall, the CO made significant contributions to the GEWE agenda in Nigeria in the policy space. Programmes supported by the CO related to WPP, WPS and GBV, which all proved instrumental in shaping policies, and enhancing institutional and community capacities both at national and state levels. Strong partnerships with a diverse group of women-led CSOs to a large extent allowed the advancement and continuity of the benefits of GE at the grassroots level.

However, the sustainability of interventions hinges on several factors and mostly extend beyond the confines of strictly internal measures that UN Women can take. The tripartite legal system that accommodates statutory, customary and religious laws, underpins a male-dominated, socio-cultural structure that drives women's exclusion. This posed a challenge for the efficiency and sustainability of actions and results. While there was a strong commitment from the higher ranks of the government, capacity to implement gender-responsive policies and legislative frameworks was inadequate.

Political will was also scarce especially at the local level, which had a significant bearing on the sustainability of UN Women-supported interventions across the integrated mandate. The gender-specific paradigms which resulted from these limitations require sustained advocacy and programming in the long term.

Many stakeholders interviewed emphasized that a stable and optimal HR structure was an immediate and pressing need for UN Women in Nigeria to be able to sustain its coordination role and contribute to the sustainability of commitments and gains made on GEWE.

Similarly, stakeholders expressed the need for a large scale and long-term programmatic approach by UN Women to ensure the sustainability of actions. The fragmented nature of projects both in terms of funding and duration offsets long-term benefits. This was further highlighted by survey respondents who highlighted the inadequacy of the implementation period in realizing meaningful impacts.

FINDING 24



Influencing the broader women's political participation and leadership architecture required longer time frames and more resources than was available to the CO during the last two general elections.

Despite disappointing results in terms of the representation of women elected in the last general election,¹⁴ the CO's 2019 election efforts saw the coordinated deployment of CSOs and the media to advocate and mobilize Nigerians around GEWE-responsive elections in the country.

Training and mentorship programmes were provided to women voters and potential candidates. CSO capacities to support women-inclusive elections were thus established. According to a great number of actors active in the WPP space, this success was evident in the number of voters, candidates and the movement created. The unprecedented number of women involved in the 2019 elections is grounds enough to continue the CO's social and political engagements towards significant political participation of women in the country.

However, the work of gender activists was rendered difficult considering that Nigeria's legal framework was highly marked by patriarchy. This led to doubts regarding the choice of interventions: "if we already knew that we cannot influence the women's political

leadership in the country context, then, we should not have started this intervention" argued some of the stakeholders interviewed. They questioned the appropriateness and adequacy of the interventions in shaping outcome level changes.

Many stakeholders highlighted that influencing the broader WPP architecture required longer time frames and more resources than had been available to the CO during the last two general elections.

UN Women's approach to implementing election-related activities proved less effective in producing the desired goals of increased women's representation and participation in Nigeria. When funds were mobilized, they were limited and arrived too late into the election process (e.g. 2015 election) to have a tangible impact. For instance, the total amount of funds expended for WPP before the 2019 election constituted 15 per cent of the CO's total programme budget. This was a modest but greater investment relative to the 2015 election (5 per cent of the total programme budget).

FINDING 25



The WPS programme, funded by the EU for four years, was the most resourced and successful project and laid a solid foundation for institutional and programmatic sustainability.

Under the WPS programme funded by the EU, the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs & Social Development constituted a council of key stakeholders involved in the programme to ensure that UNSCR projects continued in the target Local Government Administrations and were replicated in other areas. With the support of the CO, the state governments were encouraged to dedicate separate budget lines to advance the WPS agenda: so far, two states in North-East Nigeria dedicated separate budgets while negotiations were still ongoing with the remaining states.

The WPS programme led to the Women Peace Mentors Forums which formed into state peace forums in all three states. These forums were registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) for the continued implementation of WPS initiatives on a sustainable basis. As a result, a critical mass of women participating in peace and security was created. Furthermore, to consolidate learning from the EU-funded project and build on lessons learned, key stakeholders were included in the design of the WPS flagship project, which was a continuation of the previous WPS project, but implemented in different states (Bauchi, Benue).

As a humanitarian response to the conflict in the state of Borno, the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) interventions used a community-based approach for rehabilitating and reintegrating conflict-affected women both socially and economically. During the evaluation team's mission to Maiduguri, women who were beneficiaries of the projects reported improved

skills and knowledge in processing post-harvest rice through parboiling technology and milling, and other trades including tailoring, food production and local perfumery. With the help of the project, vulnerable women were organized into cooperatives and supported with start-up kits and rice milling machines. Those who received training in rice milling were able to carry out all the processes on their own without support from the project.

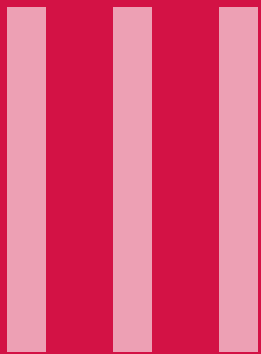
The project beneficiaries also reported an increase in income, although not significant, but as a result of which they were able to send their children to school. Beneficiaries also mentioned a shift in power dynamics at the household level.

Nonetheless, while the projects demonstrated promising results, it was unclear how likely it is that these activities will continue beyond the lifetime of the project in the absence of further funding. In addition, given the enormity of the security situation and the complex gender dynamics in North Eastern Nigeria, there was a risk that WEE projects were likely to remain fragmented and have limited impact.

The CO's joint programming in the humanitarian space is laudable; however, there was a need for a business case to be made for the CO to build stronger synergies between its humanitarian efforts, WPS interventions and development needs. Small-scale projects such as these could be leveraged to demonstrate results for larger-scale investments.



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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation had two overarching purposes: (a) to help consolidate learning from what works well and what could be done differently; and (b) to offer evidence-informed insights to support the mid-term review of the current SN in 2020. These conclusions were guided by evaluation questions and judgment criteria, and based on analysis of all information collected and triangulated through key informant interviews; FGDs; desk review; and the evaluator's assessment of the CO's SNs. These conclusions were then drawn together to provide a number of recommendations presented in this section.

CONCLUSION

1

UN Women's strategic positioning within Nigeria and the choice of interventions were broadly relevant to GEWE needs and the operating context of its thematic areas (both at the national and subnational level). Although the balance of thematic priorities was mainly driven by funding availability, the CO was broadly doing the right things across its project portfolio.

The CO's programme and priorities had been adapted to the complexity of Nigeria's political governance system, emerging security issues and the country's GEWE priorities. The CO made serious efforts to respond to the government's need for policy advocacy, capacity building and security issues particularly in North Eastern Nigeria.

Due to the insecurity and humanitarian situation in North Eastern Nigeria, the CO managed to mobilize substantial resources in support of the WPS programme and provided integrated assistance in humanitarian settings, including in the response to the rescued Chibok girls and their family members. While both SNs reflected a good balance of GEWE priorities relevant to the Nigerian context, there were some indications of ad hoc/opportunistic operational projects that might not fully align with SN priorities or be within the CO's comparative competency advantage. However, there were also corporate incentives to raise funds, and funds raised can sometimes be leveraged.

CONCLUSION

2

The CO recorded significant achievement in its normative mandates, ensuring that Nigeria fulfils its international commitments; supporting the adoption of international instruments; and the enhancement of gender-responsive systems, laws and policies. However, adoption of laws and implementing policy gains at the state and local government level remained a significant challenge.

The engagement of UN Women at the normative level was highly valued and presented an opportunity for the CO to elevate its stature in the GE space in the country. However, adoption of laws and implementation of policy gains at the state and local government level remained a significant challenge.

The three-tiered federal system of government and the tripartite legal system in Nigeria further complicated the process of embedding changes in policy at the state and local government level. This proved challenging, particularly as it levied high demand for UN Women resources and staff time. However, this perhaps presents an opportunity for UN Women to rethink how it contributes to the vision for advancing GEWE in the Nigerian context. In particular, how it balances its role as: (a) an "upstream" knowledge-based think tank/organization influencing policy; and (b) a "downstream" field-based organization implementing programmes in places where women and girl's empowerment is critical.

Most key informants believed that UN Women's convening power at the highest level could be further leveraged to stimulate legal reforms on GEWE policies, especially in light of the outcome of the general election in 2019 in terms of the decline of women's representation in political office.

The CO enjoyed a good degree of legitimacy in the gender space. There was near unanimous recognition that the CO's advocacy efforts and closely developed partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders amplified the voices of women in various strategic discourses. These efforts enhanced the strategic positioning of the CO's leadership, which was viewed as strong and vocal in bringing GEWE issues to the forefront. However, given the size of Nigeria's population and the challenges in GE, the same cannot necessarily be said for the CO's technical competency and resource capacity. This assessment was occasioned, in part, by a perception of UN Women as poorly resourced and therefore in some areas lacking the in-house technical capacity to generate the highest quality analyses on emerging GEWE issues (particularly within a wide range of economic, social and environmental dimensions).

The CO's visibility extends above and beyond its capacity. The CPE found that the CO demonstrated a clear comparative strength in the following areas: mobilizing voice for women through a thriving partnership with women-led and women's-rights CSOs; mobilizing high-level stakeholders at very short notice; and advocating on strategic and sensitive GE areas such as EVAWG, WPP and WPS. UN Women's approach in bringing together a diverse group of existing women's networks yielded success in harnessing and encouraging collective actions on common GEWE agenda in Nigeria. The Nigeria Chapter of the AWLN was a good example of this. However, some initiatives that demonstrated promising traction were not always systematically pursued, compromising the initial gains and momentum created.

Within the UN system, UN Women was also well-represented in key strategic spaces in Nigeria. CO leadership was often perceived as proactive, forthcoming and 'open for business'. The CO achieved a measure of success and expanded its joint programme portfolio in the context of the humanitarian–development arena. In concluding that the visibility of the CO was greater than its capacity, it is worth noting the CO's success in securing a seat at the HCT, where the need for gender-responsiveness is urgently needed for humanitarian response. However, stable, high-level technical competency and resource capacity remained an obstacle for the CO to fully deliver its coordination mandate on GEWE. During the evaluation process, most key informants interviewed remained sceptical of the CO's operational capacity, given the size of Nigeria's population and the country's challenges in GE.

The complexity of Nigeria's three-tiered federalism (the national, state and local governments), and institutional context, positioned multi-level interventions as the most strategic and effective model to stimulate transformative change across the different levels of governance.

There was near consensus across all stakeholders and donors consulted that policy-level work on GEWE alone will not stimulate the change that is needed in Nigeria. To a certain extent, the CO's approach of combining policy-level work with state-level interventions proved effective in consolidating policy gains; building the capacity of gender machinery; and facilitating the adoption and popularization of legislative frameworks in target states. For instance, this approach yielded promising results in WPS. Nonetheless, for greater and more sustainable impact, the CO should move away from taking the 'business as usual' approach (e.g. traditional workshops, meetings, knocking on the doors of institutions) to more cutting-edge and innovative community-based interventions in pushing for change in cultural norms.

In addition, the CO, and UN Women more widely, could benefit from approaching new innovative intervention ideas as pilot projects to study what works in terms of scaling-up and instil a culture of M&E, self-evaluation, learning and knowledge management in the office.

Significant funding combined with a multi-year, multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach enabled UN Women to achieve considerable impact in the WPS programmatic area and allowed replication beyond targeted states. However, a more effective and sustainable outcome would have been achieved with better planning; earlier identification of suitable PPs; and a risk-based plan organized before the start of project implementation.

One significant source of funding was the EU, which contributed EUR 10 million to the WPS project. While the project faced internal and external challenges, it also demonstrated a working model to influence and strengthen the capacity of institutions (formal and traditional) and challenge the social norms that limit opportunities for women's participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Some of the achievements of the WPS programme were remarkable. Despite patriarchal structures especially in northern Nigeria, the WPS programme was successful in bringing the voices of women into the decision-making arena where they had been virtually absent.

UN Women's involvement in the 2015 and 2019 elections were favourably recognized as bolstering engagement of various actors in most of the gender-focused campaigns and interventions for equal inclusion of women in politics. Nonetheless, the CO's interventions had not yet yielded tangible results. While no significant gains were realized in terms of an increase in women's political representation, the last general election witnessed landmark participation by women as election observers/monitors, voters, aspirants and political candidates. In this process, UN Women was a recognized key player, as verified by several stakeholders. However, many stakeholders also highlighted that influencing the broader WPP architecture required longer time frames and more resources than had been available to the CO during the period that covered the last two general elections. When funds were mobilized, they were insufficient and arrived too late in the election process to have a tangible impact on women's representation in Nigeria.

Effective campaigns and community mobilization strategies led to increased awareness and commitment to GEWE. The HeforShe campaign was widely acknowledged by key stakeholders and other UN agencies as raising UN Women's profile; increasing its influence; and helping the CO to secure commitments to GE at the highest levels of decision-making structures, legislators, parliamentarians, the private sector, and formal and traditional council leaders. However, the CO should further monitor the wider efficacy and impact of communications, advocacy and network-building activities on changing behaviours and norms (beyond anecdotal evidence). This would help it to be better able to demonstrate impact, in order to make strategic decisions around what to scale up (and down) as well as to contribute to its resource mobilization efforts.

The UN-EU SPI on ending VAWG was the most prominent joint gender programme in Nigeria both in terms of programmatic interventions and scale. In addition to the relatively high level of resources, the SPI was considered a high-stake programme and a litmus test for an integrated and joined-up model to accelerate change on ending VAWG. In addition to raising visibility on gender issues, the SPI also extended the reach of UN Women's comparative advantage and opened up partnership opportunities in other sectors. Nonetheless, it was too early to make any robust judgment about the success of the SPI, and it will take time to witness concrete changes in legislative, institutional and social norms. Having said this, "the success of UN Women is key for the overall success of the SPI initiative in Nigeria", which was connected to UN Women's high share of SPI resources and its role as a co-lead in ensuring technical coherence.

The scale of some CO interventions presented a risk of limited transformative impact. UN Women catalysed and contributed towards GEWE by influencing wider laws and policies and strengthening institutions and systems, as well as building strategic partnerships to deliver results for girls, women and other disadvantaged groups. Albeit small in scale, vulnerable women such as small-scale rural farmers, IDPs and returnees, and rescued/released Chibok girls had access to a wide range of livelihood/income generation services and resources. However, the scale of CO interventions, presented a risk of limited impact to large scale transformative changes especially in the area of livelihoods/economic empowerment. The partnership and joined-up efforts by the CO with FAO, WFP and other agencies was an effective way to reach a wider audience of potential beneficiaries and, therefore, achieve greater value for money with its limited resources.

The evaluation assessed that the WPS programme was the most successful programme and demonstrated promising results in deconstructing localized forms of patriarchy and securing the appointment of women to traditional councils. For women's political participation and leadership, the hard-won spaces for women to vote and participate were rolled back in the 2019 elections. Nonetheless, addressing the root causes of the exclusion and underrepresentation of women in a country as large, diverse, and patriarchal as Nigeria is neither easy, quick or the responsibility of UN Women alone and requires multi-stakeholder engagement.

Despite a recent capacity surge and a very committed and dedicated workforce, the CO's current 'staffing structure' remains antithetical to building a stable and technically sound team. In this context, the CO faced difficulties in delivering on its ambitious SN and in playing a strategic role as a liaison with ECOWAS.

The CO used a range of approaches to address its staffing deficit and strengthen its in-house capacity, especially as part of the 2018–2022 SN. However, a heavy reliance on consultants and other short-term personnel to drive important work increased risks to consistency and stability in delivery and could create a parallel structure of personnel who do not have recourse to the same protections and benefits as staff members. This can increase the risk of an unhealthy working environment and challenges to team cohesion.

The loss of institutional memory, staff attrition and high turnover rates were recurring themes raised by a significant number of key informants. Institutional gaps were often attributed to the erosion of institutional memory and limited the CO's capacity to play a more active and regular role in the technical direction and coordination of DPGG and the GTG – the main technical body for implementation and monitoring of the UNCT's work on GEWE priorities in Nigeria.

Although some internal and external factors were unavoidable, pragmatic and coherent planning could have yielded greater efficiency.

Building on lessons from the previous SN, the CO had made noteworthy improvements in programme planning and PP management. This helped to achieve a certain degree of cohesion. However, the efficiency of the CO was affected by a lack of coherent planning and risk management; heavy business processes; HR constraints; and stretched presence on the ground. These constraints largely manifested in delays in recruitment of project staff; a slow and lengthy process for identifying and concluding agreements with PPs; and delays in the release of funds. The gaps also limited the CO's capacity to play a more active and uninterrupted role in technical, convening and coordination roles on GEWE. The absence of coherence in planning led to projects being developed in isolation, thus limiting the opportunity to fully leverage the complementarities that may have existed across various thematic areas.

A more result-oriented approach and strong M&E would have allowed the CO to better showcase its achievements in the gender space. The CO conducted an impressive amount of quality research and baseline surveys and there was ample evidence of the use of these studies to establish benchmarks/success targets and evidence-based programming. Nevertheless, the extent to which this wealth of evidence was used as part of regular monitoring, learning and reporting was not always evident. This presents a missed opportunity and perhaps risks best value for money as such data collection activities are costly and if not produced on time run the risk of being of limited use. In the absence of a dedicated staff member overseeing M&E activities, M&E remained a challenging area for the CO.

At the policy level, the CO helped create an environment that enabled the adoption of gender-friendly legislative frameworks, policies and strategies, some of which could be attributed to the long-standing support of UN Women. Nonetheless, the sustainability of interventions hinges on several factors, some of which were outside of UN Women's control. The fragmented nature of projects both in terms of funding and duration offsets long-term benefits and sustainability.

The CO enjoyed a good reputation for enhancing the capacity of both national and state-level gender machinery. Strong partnerships with a diverse and vibrant civil society and CBOs to a greater extent allowed the advancement of GE at the grassroots level and helped lay the foundations for the continuity of benefits. However, the sustainability of the CO's interventions hinges on several factors and largely extends beyond the confines of strictly internal UN Women issues. The tripartite legal system that accommodates statutory, customary and religious laws, underpins a male-dominated, socio-cultural structure that drives women's exclusion. UN Women's stretched presence on the ground and operational weaknesses of local partners generated high transaction costs, which had a bearing on the sustainability of UN Women-supported interventions and the CO's convening role within coordination mechanisms.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

The context in which this CPE was conducted changed dramatically with the Covid-19 pandemic after the data collection and analysis of the findings phase. Accordingly, UN Women should aim to implement these recommendations when the country moves to post-crisis recovery. In the meantime, the CO should strive to incorporate the recommendations into its work to the extent possible given the current context. Other valuable recommendations and lessons are contained within the body of the report. The following key recommendations represent the most critical for the office to consider in its next strategic planning cycle.

RECOMMENDATION

1

Intensify engagement in the lead up to key strategic events in 2020, such as “A Year of Action” and ensure integration of gender perspectives in the context of Covid-19 and its ensuing post-pandemic recovery implications.

URGENCY: HIGH

IMPACT: HIGH

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM TO HIGH

The complexity of gender inequality in Nigeria posed both a pressing challenge and an opportunity for UN Women to expand its influence and resource base in the country. Although the election outcome in terms of the number of women elected to office was discouraging, it served as a national rallying point and reinforced the need for UN Women’s continued and increased engagement in the GE space. In this context, the CO should play a more strategic role around key strategic events in 2020 (Nigeria’s Vision 2030, SDG+5, UNCT led Common Country Assessment, revision of the UNSDPF, Beijing +25 launch).

The Covid-19 crisis also presented a new challenge and opportunity for the CO to join with the UN system and beyond to preserve the limited gains made on GE and tackle the disproportionate impact of the crisis on the most vulnerable. Within this context, UN Women should position itself as a think-tank; increase its advocacy; and serve as an analytical bank on GE-related issues including the differential impact of Covid-19 on women. In doing this, and building on its legitimacy within the gender space, the CO could attract additional resources commensurate with the ambition of its SN.

RECOMMENDATION

2

Develop a coherent business case and agenda to better formalize the revitalized partnership with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs for sustainable impact.

URGENCY: MEDIUM TO HIGH

IMPACT: MEDIUM TO HIGH

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

Within the current SN, the CO intensified its efforts towards strengthening the capacity of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs to enable it to fulfil its role as co-chair of the DPGG and set priorities during convenings for GEWE in Nigeria. These efforts resulted in more financial and technical support and investment by members and led to more collaborative and coordinated engagements than before.

However, given the limitations of the gender machinery, UN Women should continue to deploy its advocacy and technical expertise and establish stronger ties with relevant government ministries, especially the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and state parastatals, for tangible and sustained impact on a range of GE priorities in Nigeria. This includes further enhancing the capacity of the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs within DPGG to be able to fulfil its role as a permanent co-chair. UN Women’s convening power at the highest level could also be further leveraged to stimulate legal reforms on GEWE policies, especially in light of the downward trend in women’s political representation in 2019. Within DPGG, members expected UN Women to be strategic and ensure continuation of its secretariat function without interruption. Representation in such a dynamic group required a mix of substantive gender expertise and robust coordination skills.

Ensure continuity of the CO's leadership of the Gender Theme Group (GTG) and other gender coordination mechanisms without interruption to sustain the momentum created.

URGENCY: HIGH

IMPACT: MEDIUM TO HIGH

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

The CO exerted its leadership within the key coordination mechanisms in the UN system such as the UNCT and the GTG. Although it had periods of low activity in the past, it was clear that the GTG was moving in the right direction at the time of evaluation. The challenge for the CO is to ensure that UN Women's leadership of the GTG and other coordination mechanisms, such as DPGG, is not interrupted to sustain the momentum created; and to ensure the CO demonstrates the value that UN Women brings to effective monitoring of implementation of the UNCT's work on GE and gender mainstreaming.

The main four routes to achieving this include: (i) a shift from opportunistic one-off events to a more strategic approach linked to national GE priorities; (ii) encouraging the timely initiation and completion of the UNCT gender scorecard, pivotal to driving commitment and increasing the accountability of agencies on GEWE; (iii) ensuring timely implementation of the UNCT scorecard and the planned start of the GTG assessments; and (iv) ensuring availability of sufficient staff resources to support the role of chair of the GTG.

In consultation with regional and headquarters HR offices, organize an HR-mapping exercise and analysis of functions, and develop a plan to fill major capacity gaps and build a more stable workforce.

URGENCY: HIGH

IMPACT: HIGH

DIFFICULTY: HIGH

While acknowledged as a consequence of limited funding, UN Women's fragile staffing structure was not fully suited to deliver the ambitions of the SN and the CO's desire to become a 'technically savvy', 'results-demonstrating', 'knowledge-based organization' in line with the vision of its external stakeholders. In this context, there is a window of opportunity within the current SN to embark on an HR mapping exercise and analysis of functions to fully capture office and workforce capacity and determine how to deliver on high-priority areas. Most importantly, how the workforce in the states and engagement in ECOWAS can, over time, be better supported for effective programme delivery. Taken together, these actions would have a direct impact on reducing thematic silos; enhancing internal operational support capability; encouraging planning and coordination across the different streams; and preserving institutional memory.

Rethink the strategy towards achieving inclusive political participation in the 2023 election.

URGENCY: HIGH

IMPACT: MEDIUM TO HIGH

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM TO HIGH

UN Women needs to advance the outcomes of the national conference, guided by the framework codified in 2019 post-mortem: "What did not work, what could have been done better, and what should be done ahead of the 2023 general election". As a matter of urgency, the working group (IFES, NDI, ECES and UN Women) needs to be reinvigorated to ensure implementation of agreed-upon actions ahead of the 2023 election. Given the male-dominated socio-cultural fabric, programmatic actions should be anchored to address the root causes of the exclusion and underrepresentation of women in mainstream politics. This is particularly important, as standing for election is often the preserve of rich individuals due to the huge amount of money involved in preparation for elective offices.

To be effective and sustainable, UN Women and its partners' efforts must directly target political parties. During the 2019 elections, women were excluded from party patronage networks, despite the introduction of a registration fee waiver for women. Advocates must be mobilized to have political parties create special platforms for the selection and presentation of female candidates. The arguments for such platforms would refer to previously observed violence towards women candidates and the continued lack of party support for affirmative action on WPP.

Enhance proactive planning/sequencing and business processes to ensure greater efficiency.

URGENCY: HIGH

IMPACT: MEDIUM TO HIGH

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM TO HIGH

To improve efficiency, the CO needs an approach whereby potential personnel are considered for upcoming projects and PPs are pre-identified before signing an agreement, so that staff recruitment and PP selection coincides with the timing of a project/programme. This approach would involve determining the activities ahead of programme start-date (i.e. seeing what consultancy is required, preparing ToR, determining implementation modality, pre-assessing PPs, etc.). The lead time would also help to reduce the burden on CO operations personnel.

Risk management plan should be put in place to better gauge risks for delayed start-up of projects; low delivery; and limitations in the capacity of CBOs to deliver. Complex operations such as WPS and in North-East Nigeria must be carefully calibrated to fit the political and operational context. Although the Maiduguri office operated on a small scale with limited staff, there is a need for the CO to ensure that suitable security arrangements are in place, not only for those working in-station but for visiting personnel as well.

Enhance monitoring and Results-Based Management (RBM) capabilities to demonstrate impact.

URGENCY: MEDIUM TO HIGH

IMPACT: MEDIUM TO HIGH

DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

UN Women should harness the wealth of high-quality baseline surveys, studies and research it commissioned on a wide range of thematic areas. The CO should leverage and use these studies as a potentially powerful monitoring and advocacy tool, to transition to a more result-oriented and knowledge bank on GEWE issues.

A mechanism should also be in place to ensure that baseline surveys are followed by mid-line and end-line surveys to monitor the impact of interventions over time.

The CO should also further monitor the wider efficacy and impact of communications, advocacy and network-building activities on behaviours and norms (beyond anecdotal evidence of individuals who indicate change in behaviour or attitudes).

ENDNOTES

- 1** United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Population Prospect 2019
- 2** World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files, 2019
- 3** Human Development Report 2019 http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/NGA.pdf
- 4** Human Development Report 2019 http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/NGA.pdf
- 5** Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 2019
- 6** The Post-Mortem Report of the National Conference on Women's Political Participation in Nigeria: Post 2019 General Elections
- 7** Nigeria Situation Report, 6 May 2020 <https://www.unocha.org/nigeria>
- 8** This figure doesn't include some hard pipeline proposals in 2019.
- 9** UNEG 21 July 2007. Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.
- 10** The last report Nigeria submitted was in 2017; the follow-up report that was due in 2019 had yet to be submitted.
- 11** Baseline figure from Food Security and Livelihood Assessment, 2015. Figures taken from progress report to donors.
- 12** The representation of women in the federal parliament regressed from 5.6 per cent in 2015 to 4.05 per cent in 2019 while only 3.8 per cent of women were elected into the State Houses of Assembly in 2019, compared to 5.8 per cent in 2015. The percentage of women in ministerial positions was 16.2 per cent.
- 13** Review of existing state-level peace architecture from a gender and human rights perspective; a needs assessment of the Early Warning and Early Response System in the three target states; Gender Assessment on Inclusive Programmes and Policies for Food Security in Borno state; baseline data for WPS; baseline survey for the socio-economic status of women and girls affected by the insurgency in North East Nigeria; gender analysis of the legal and electoral frameworks; baseline study on affirmative procurement in the public sector in Nigeria; and a baseline survey for the SPI.
- 14** In 2019, there were 2,970 women candidates, 11.36 per cent of the total officials on the voter ballot. Elections ended with 62 women elected, which represents 4.2 per cent of the total number of candidates. This represented a decline relative to the 2015–19 period, where women formed 5.7 per cent of elected officials.

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The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service is co-located with the Internal Audit Service under the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making, and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organization's mandate, including its normative, operational, and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments, and civil society organizations.

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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.



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