



IN BRIEF

INSIGHTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY: A META-SYNTHESIS OF UN WOMEN EVALUATIONS

Photo ©UN Women/Ryan Brown

This meta-synthesis brings together evidence from evaluations on UN Women’s organizational effectiveness and efficiency outputs. In line with the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021, the synthesis focuses on issues related to the Entity’s UN coordination efforts, strategic partnerships, knowledge management, innovation, results-based management, streamlining of business processes and improvements in the management of financial and human resources.

In addition to highlighting progress, the synthesis captures commonly identified drivers of change in the form of good practices and innovation, as well as impediments. The scope of the analysis covers all evaluations commissioned by UN Women between 2018 and 2019, as well as corporate evaluations from 2017.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to analyze and identify emerging trends. Given the focus on organizational effectiveness and efficiency, the analysis and findings are organized around the related four outputs of the UN Women Strategic Plan.

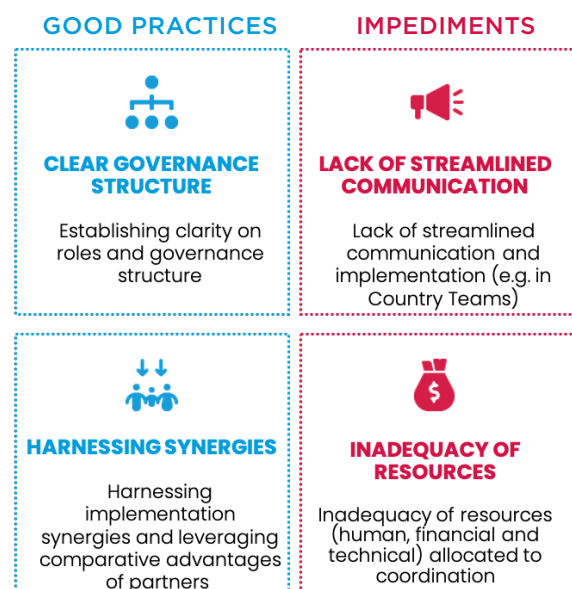


OUTPUT 1

Enhanced coordination, coherence and accountability of the United Nations system for commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment

Key insights

- UN Women plays a pivotal role in the United Nations system to enhance coherence on issues related to gender mainstreaming, gender parity and system-wide accountability in these areas. Many evaluations highlighted the established role of UN Women as a technical expert on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- Through its convening power, UN Women brings together diverse UN stakeholders. Effective coordination between UN Women and other United Nations entities is a key factor in the delivery of successful programmes, especially for United Nations joint programming.



OUTPUT 2

Increased engagement of partners in support of UN Women’s mandate

Key insights

- UN Women has shown its expertise in bringing together diverse stakeholders to comprehensively and efficiently address issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Each of these partners is important for bringing about change, contributing unique strengths and local and international connections to facilitate successful programme implementation on the ground.
- Several evaluations found that UN Women played a key role in building synergies among advocates for gender equality. This was especially true where the UN Women country and regional strategies aligned with existing programmes, allowing it to support and complement the work of government and civil society partners.

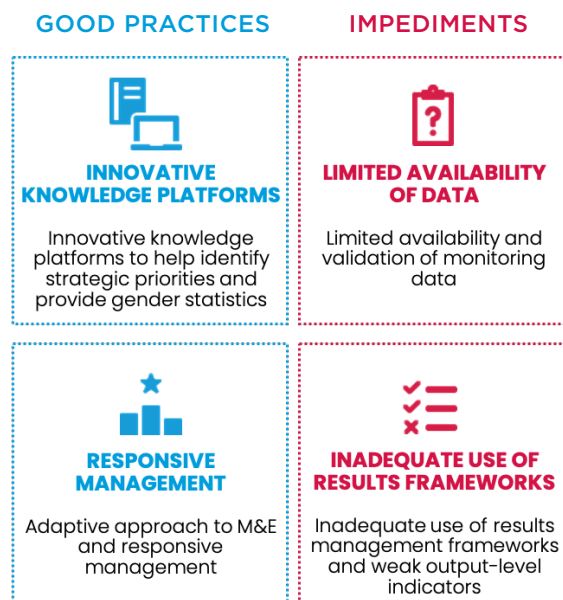


OUTPUT 3

High quality of programmes through knowledge management, innovation, results-based management and evaluation

Key insights

- Improving capacities on gender-responsive RBM continues to be a priority area for UN Women. While several evaluations indicated a strengthening of UN Women RBM systems over time, there is room for improvement. Evaluations highlighted the importance of developing a strong theory of change by engaging multiple stakeholders and using a participatory process.
- Many evaluation reports found that UN Women has been engaged in efforts to build internal and external monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity. Improvements to these systems would make UN Women better able to identify data-related challenges in various contexts to guide planning, capacity-building and monitoring activities.
- The UN Women knowledge platform and products help to identify strategic priorities and provide updated gender statistics and data. Once made available to stakeholders and decision-making authorities, knowledge products can inform national responses to gender-related issues, contribute to increased commitment from partners and provide a foundation for dialogue on issues affecting women and girls.



OUTPUT 4

Improved management of financial and human resources in pursuit of results

Key insights

- Many evaluations reported efficiency in the use and management of funds to be satisfactory. UN Women offices were found to allocate resources responsively and efficiently.
- The most commonly highlighted risk was insufficient financial resources, limiting the scope, effectiveness and impact of UN Women interventions.
- In terms of human resources, many evaluations highlighted the value of the committed personnel of UN Women in managing demanding workloads. Other factors such as the supportive and responsive management of UN Women and efforts to remove operational bottlenecks were also identified as contributing to overall improvements.
- Evaluations highlighted high turnover rates for technical personnel, the lack of continuity in management, delays in recruitment and vacancies in key positions, all leading to staff overload. Some evaluations also noted that programmes lacked any form of cost-benefit or cost-efficiency analysis, either due to data constraints or insufficient resources.

GOOD PRACTICES

STRONG LOCAL PARTNERS
Selecting strong local partners and building partner capacities

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER NETWORKS
Strengthening multi-stakeholder networks of gender-equality advocates

IMPEDIMENTS

INADEQUATE OUTREACH
Inadequate outreach and weak coordination with partners

CAPACITY OF PARTNER AND TURNOVER
Weaknesses in partner capacity and partner staff turnover

OPPORTUNITIES AND THE WAY FORWARD

STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATION-WIDE LEARNING and a broader application of **lessons** from previous successful engagements on UN Coordination.

FURTHER STRENGTHEN PARTNER NETWORKS and expand outreach to include diverse actors and donors.

ENHANCE PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE and engagement frameworks to foster strong partnerships and build on existing local relationships.

IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MONITORING SYSTEMS and strengthen institutional mechanisms for results-based management, learning and planning.

Intensify efforts towards **STRENGTHENING GENDER DATABASES** and knowledge platforms.

Continue to **ADDRESS KEY CONSTRAINTS IN FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES** through prioritization, resource mobilization and improved efficacy of business processes.