



COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION AND AUDIT

PAKISTAN

Synthesis Report



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report and the overall evaluation process were informed by the participation of more than 77 stakeholders from across stakeholder groups (28 males, 49 females). Without the support and active participation of all the individuals involved in the consultation process, this report would not have been possible.

The Independent Evaluation and Audit Services of UN Women (IEAS) combined the regular planned internal audit of the Country Office and Country Portfolio Evaluation processes to reduce the burden on the Country Office and ensure synergy. The audit was led by Rowena Cayabyab Dimaampao, audit specialist, and Saadat Ali, audit specialist under the overall supervision of Malika Mukhitdinova, Chief of Internal Audit. The evaluation was led by Sabrina Evangelista, regional evaluation specialist for the Asia and the Pacific region. The evaluation team comprised four team members: Lilia Ormonbekova, evaluation consultant; and Aleksandar Zivanovic, evaluation consultant; and Arushi Pankaj Dubey, evaluation research intern, and Sama Khan, national consultant.

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We also extend our thanks to Inga Sniukaite, Chief of the Independent Evaluation Service; Lisa Sutton, Director of IEAS; and Ross Tanner, evaluation specialist, for contributing feedback and expertise throughout the evaluation.

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ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Cards
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CPE+A	Country Portfolio Evaluation and Audit
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Group
CSO	civil society organization
DFID	Department of International Development (United Kingdom)
DRF	Development Results Framework
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
IAS	UN Women Internal Audit Service
IES	UN Women Independent Evaluation Service
IEAS	UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
OEEF	Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OP III	Pakistan One United Nations Programme III
P&B	Planning and Budgeting
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SWAP	United Nations System-Wide Action Plan
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGCTC	United Nations Global Compact on Counter-Terrorism
UN Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNOCT	United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSDf	United Nations Sustainable Development Framework
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WPE	Women's Political Empowerment
WPSH	Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION AND AUDIT PAKISTAN

This report presents the main evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Country Portfolio Evaluation and Audit (CPE+A) of the UN Women Pakistan Country Office conducted between March and September 2021. The CPE+A was jointly led by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) and Internal Audit Service (IAS). A Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) is a systematic assessment of the normative, coordination and operational aspects of UN Women's contribution to development results relating to gender equality and women's empowerment at the country level. A risk-based internal audit of a Country Office aims to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls in planning and implementing strategic priorities, programme and project management, the organizational structure and control environment, and operational processes. The audit results are presented in a separate report to ensure that the results are adequately covered. At the same time, IEAS ensured the reports are complementary and aligned.

CPE+A purpose

The purpose of the CPE+A was to provide an independent and systematic assessment of the contributions made by UN Women to development results with respect to gender equality at the country level to feed into learning on what strategies work well and what needs strengthening. A secondary purpose was to identify UN Women's comparative advantages in Pakistan and support decision-making for the Country Office strategy moving forward.

The evaluation also aimed to provide useful information to the evaluation of the Pakistan One United Nations Programme III (OP III) and insight on the strategic direction for UN Women Pakistan within the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, as adopted by General Assembly [resolution 72/279](#) on 31 May 2018. Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this evaluation has taken steps to capture how UN Women is responding to the crisis and has analysed how UN Women can best support efforts in the country moving forward.

Pakistan country context



Pakistan is now the world's **fifth most populous country** and the second among South Asian countries. Pakistan ranks **154 out of 189** countries in the **Human Development Index**.



It ranks **151 out of 153** on the **Global Gender Gap Index Report 2020** and is placed at 150 in economic participation, 143 in educational attainment, 149 in health and survival and 93 in political empowerment.



According to the 2017–2018 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey, approximately **29 per cent of women** experienced **physical or sexual violence**.



The pandemic has further **compounded pre-existing gender inequalities**. the socioeconomic impacts can be seen through loss of income/ livelihoods and limited access to protection services and health care.

Intended users of the CPE+A

The primary intended users of this CPE+A are Country Office personnel and the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and relevant headquarters management and units.

The secondary intended users are the Government of Pakistan; development partners, such as United Nations agencies and bilateral/multilateral agencies; and civil society.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator/Resident Coordinator's Office in Pakistan would also benefit from understanding the value added and contribution of UN Women to achieving OP III outcomes, as part of the evaluation of OP III and planning for the new United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDF) 2023–2027 in Pakistan.

Intended uses of the CPE+A



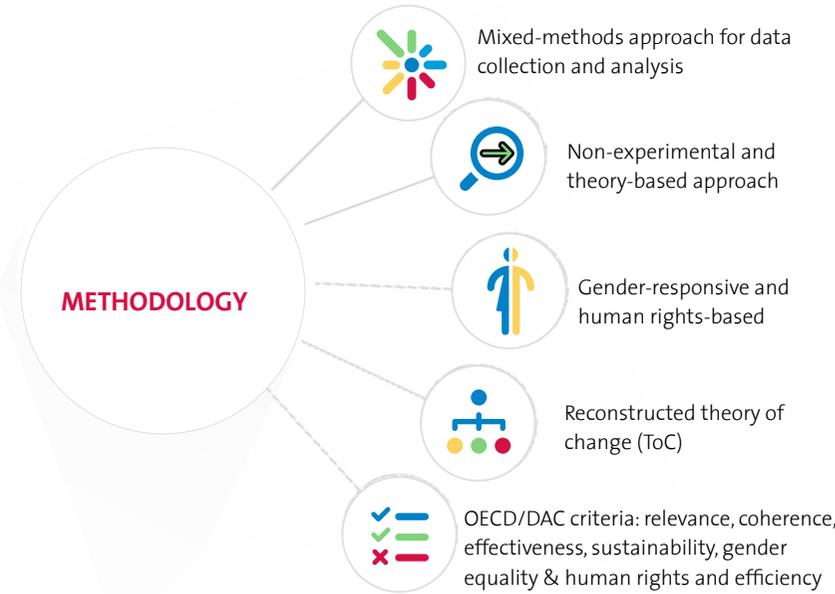
Learning and improved decision-making to **support the effectiveness** of the Country Office's work



Accountability for UN Women's interventions in terms of providing technical support to the Government of Pakistan and other activities related to gender equality and women's empowerment



Lessons learned and good practices for national, regional and other stakeholders working on gender equality and women's empowerment



77 stakeholders interviewed

49 Females
28 Males

2 focus group discussions
and 2 case studies on capacity-building and sub-office architecture

+100 documents reviewed
Analysis of more than 100 documents

Evaluation objectives

Assess **effectiveness and organizational efficiency** in progressing towards the achievement of results in gender equality and the empowerment of women

Assess the **relevance and coherence** of the UN Women programme vis-a-vis the United Nations system, the added value of UN Women, and the contributions of UN Women to United Nations system and OP III outcomes

Analyse how a **human rights approach and gender equality principles** are integrated in the design and implementation of UN Women's work in Pakistan and contribute to the sustainability of efforts

Provide **actionable recommendations** to support UN Women's strategic positioning moving forward

Internal audit objectives

Assess the effectiveness of the Pakistan Country Office's **governance arrangements, risk management and control processes** relating to the following areas

Planning and implementation of strategic priorities, including processes related to advocacy and communications, coordination, work planning and resource mobilization, field programme implementation and monitoring, and project management

Governance and risk management in relation to the Country Office structure and resources, roles, responsibilities, authority, risk-focused decision-making, control environment, and knowledge management from prior oversight reports

Operational processes related to implementing partners, procurement, human resources and travel

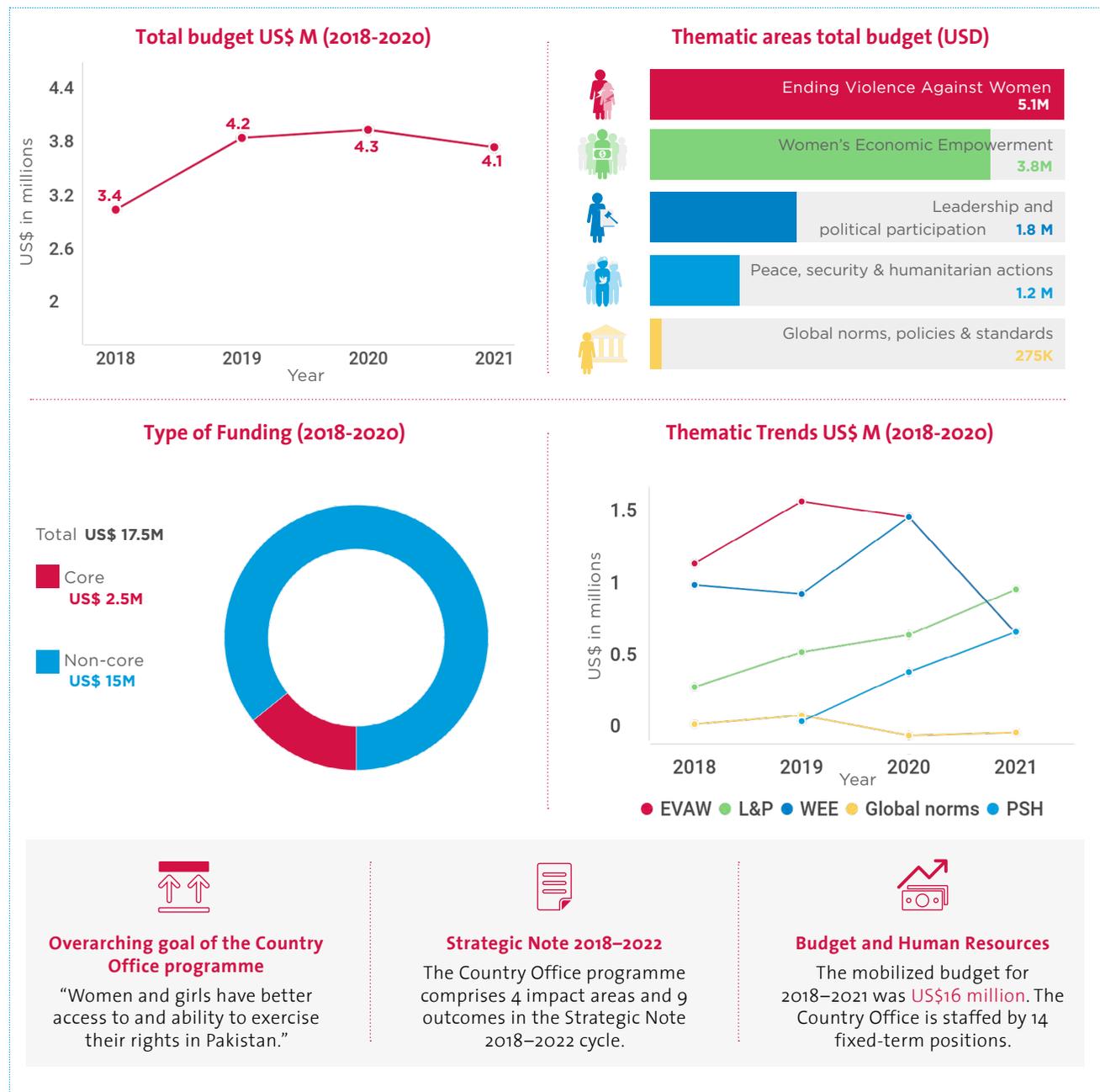
Background on UN Women in Pakistan

Gender inequality is of significant concern in Pakistan. It ranks 151 out of 153 on the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2020 and is placed at 150 in economic participation, 143 in educational attainment, 149 in health and survival and 93 in political empowerment.* Despite the Government of Pakistan's stated policy and ongoing endeavours towards advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the country, the pace of progress remains uneven with constant challenges. Gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence occur at high rates. The global COVID-19 pandemic has further compounded pre-existing gender inequalities.**

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) preceded UN Women with an office in Pakistan since 2007. The Strategic Note is the main planning tool for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through UN Women's support to normative, coordination and operational work and is designed to align with UN Women's Global Strategic Plan, in addition to United Nations country-level outcomes and national priorities for development, gender equality and women's empowerment. The Country Office Strategic Note 2018–2022 comprises four impact areas and nine outcomes with a mobilized budget of US\$16 million for 2018–2021. The Country Office work is focused in two areas, each managed by one portfolio manager: (1) Ending Violence against Women and (2) gender-responsive Women's Economic Empowerment. Ending Violence Against Women has been the thematic and financial focus of the office, with US\$5.1 million, or 43.3 per cent of the total budget (Development Results Framework (DRF)) in the period 2018–2021, allocated to the implementation of several programmes and projects. Women's Economic Empowerment has been the other key focus area of UN Women in Pakistan, with US\$3.4 million, or 28.9 per cent the total budget (DRF) in the period 2018–2021, allocated to these programmes.

* World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index Report 2021. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

** Pakistan Brief: United Nations Response to COVID-19 in Pakistan. 13 July 2020. Accessed online [here](#).



CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Pakistan country context for gender equality and women's empowerment is challenging, with deep-rooted patriarchal norms and high gender inequality and discrimination against women. As a small agency in Pakistan, and with only 1.1 per cent of the US\$461 million in expenditure of the United Nations system in 2020 allocated towards Outcome 8 (Gender, Equality and Dignity) of the One UN Programme, UN Women has huge scope for growth. The Country Office brings value through its strong technical expertise on gender and the production of research and evidence for decision-making and focus on the most marginalized voices. The Country Office worked with a diverse range of local and international partners, including United Nations partners, donors, the Government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs), and was active in engaging groups of women from ethnic minority communities, women with disabilities, women engaged in the informal sector, women in rural areas, home-based workers and transgender communities.

There is an immense need to change negative social norms and harmful practices, and UN Women's voice must continue to grow stronger in a crowded development space by leveraging partnerships that can amplify the collective message of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Country Office has demonstrated its ability to adapt and respond in times of crisis such as the global COVID-19 pandemic. Partners are looking to UN Women in Pakistan to provide strategic direction for gender equality and women's empowerment based on research and evidence that can contribute to their own programming efforts that can be taken to scale. The Country Office needs to clarify its niche in Pakistan and identify where it can maximize its influence and scale up efforts in gender equality and women's empowerment. The ability of the Country Office to be responsive and flexible in its approach is essential as it solidifies the trust and confidence of its partners.

Relevance and coherence

CONCLUSION 1

Overall, there is room for increased visibility and understanding among stakeholders of UN Women's niche within the gender equality and empowerment of women space.

The Country Office is emerging from a period of internal challenges related to management change and gaps in funding with a renewed sense of purpose and drive. This is an opportune moment for the Country Office to rethink its strategic priorities and sub-thematic focus to ensure relevance and coherence both internally and externally with the United Nations system and continue delivering relevant support during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Partners across stakeholder types identified the Country Office focus on gender equality and women's empowerment through integrated normative and policy support and research and evidence generation as an area of added value, noting that gender often gets sidelined in Pakistan, even by other United Nations agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 1



Based on consultations with key stakeholders, **continue refining the Country Office vision document** by aligning it with the UN Women Strategic Plan, and more **clearly identifying the niche of the Country Office** and communicating this to partners. Reduce the number of impact areas in the Strategic Note by mainstreaming key areas while maintaining a focus on strategic areas that are aligned with needs and opportunities to influence and scale up efforts in gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan, primarily through the United Nations system.

CONCLUSION 2

UN Women's success depends on its ability to influence the rest of the United Nations system to prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment within their own operations and programmatic work.

The Country Office has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to joint programmes and programming efforts in line with the One United Nations concept and United Nations reform principles. The lack of a UNCT-System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard, coupled with the evaluation team's assessment that the UNSDF indicators meet only the minimum requirements when it comes to measuring changes in gender equality, makes it evident that there is room to strengthen overall gender mainstreaming in the UNSDF. The newly established consolidated UNCT Working Group on Gender Equality has potential to move the coordination efforts in the right direction, i.e. beyond activities. However, an overall gender strategy, including roles and responsibilities with respect to coordination, should be clarified.

RECOMMENDATION 2



In close coordination with the Resident Coordinator's Office, **formalize and implement a UN Women coordination strategy**, aligning it with UNSDF, UNCT-SWAP and embedding it within its Strategic Note. Use UN Women's leadership role in the Gender Theme Group to coordinate efforts in potentially overlapping interventions and improve the platform for gender issues.

Effectiveness and sustainability

CONCLUSION 3

The Country Office influenced the drafting and adoption of key policies, strategies and frameworks aimed at advancing the rights of women.

The Country Office supported the national and provincial commissions on the status of women in monitoring compliance with international commitments under CEDAW and contributed to the UNCT's periodic confidential CEDAW report. The Country Office supported the Government in the preparation of the Beijing+25 review and in the conduct of the Voluntary National Review in 2019 and contributed to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights reporting in 2020. A combination of strategies, including evidence-generation, leveraging partnerships and relationships with key decision-makers and influencers, and providing technical support to drafting legislation, led to success in supporting the translation of international norms into domestic policy action. One of the most effective strategies of the Country Office has been its advocacy and communications campaigns. In terms of reach, and in combination with other efforts, contributions to policy-level change are notable.

Additionally, the CPE identified several strategies that contributed to sustainability including: 1) providing technical support to the establishment of frameworks and strategies;

2) embedding technical expertise within partner institutions; 3) generating and using research and evidence to advocate for institutionalization; and 4) establishing mechanisms to facilitate data collection and reporting on gender equality and women's empowerment. The CPE found more evidence of action and success with government partners than with civil society. There are examples of where the Country Office was able to influence the allocation of budget and the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate sustainability. However, follow-up and costing were not always achieved, which limited the potential for sustainability.

As the Country Office recognizes, implementation of policies and frameworks requires further attention. Greater impact could have been achieved and sustainability ensured through an overarching capacity-building approach linking its efforts across partners, thematic areas and projects through a long-term lens.

RECOMMENDATION 3



The Country Office should **develop a holistic capacity-building approach** or strategy and strategic partnership management that cuts across thematic areas and partners and becomes the Country Office signature service.

Human rights and gender equality

CONCLUSION 4

Achieving gender equality requires a whole-of-society approach that at its roots tackles the harmful social norms that sustain discrimination and disempowerment.

The Country Office has integrated the principle of leaving no one behind by engaging women with disabilities and transgender groups as well as women in the most marginalized areas of Pakistan who are without civil registration, providing opportunities for access to services and contributing to their empowerment. However, there is limited information about the results of these efforts.

The Country Office must dedicate itself to capacitating its partners to effectively apply these principles in their work and to ensure contextually relevant and sensitive approaches for each group. Likewise, partners must be supported to monitor, evaluate and learn from these efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 4



Define the social norms the Country Office will target and, in collaboration with civil society, establish a long-term strategy for building the women's movement, supporting grass-roots organizations and catalysing civil society to ensure that those representing the most marginalized voices are at the forefront of discussions to take forward gender equality and women's empowerment advocacy around these social norms.

Governance and organizational efficiency

CONCLUSION 5

Attention to Country Office governance has been initiated with a view to reducing silos and ensuring adequate capacity across thematic priorities and in the field, which may result in gaining efficiencies in delivery of results.

The Country Office has had several challenges, including the loss of major funding, issues around inclusive planning and transparency, and a period without permanent senior leadership. These events affected the Country Office's positioning and funding stability, contributing to inter-personal tensions due to uncertainties in personnel contracting and business continuity and affected the overall morale of personnel. The Country Office has also relied significantly on consultants, which resulted in a high turn-over and lack of institutional memory. While steps have been taken towards enhancing communications across teams and encouraging an inclusive planning process, structural issues need to be addressed to support the sustainability of these efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 5



Review and revise the existing staffing structure to ensure that the Country Office has adequate capacity and clear accountability to deliver its strategic priorities within its current thematic and geographical structure, with priority given in the short term to the delivery of remaining and newly funded projects and, in parallel, invest in a culture of care by adopting the transformative leadership capacity building approach **and institutionalizing mechanisms to support cross-team collaboration.**

CONCLUSION 6

The Country Office programme management frameworks were focused on activity level efforts and did not adequately capture outcome-level change, and limited attention to the monitoring and evaluation function has impacted the ability of the office to report confidently on results and limited the overall capability to ensure good use of resources to deliver results.

For example, while the social media and communications efforts related to child marriage have had wide reach, without an office-wide communications strategy that is aligned with the programmatic interventions of the Country Office, the potential to understand the results and their transformational potential is limited. Even for long-term projects such as the home-based workers programme, the cohort of beneficiaries was not engaged or tracked over the long term. New cohorts were engaged, which increased the total number reached, but there was no indication of the overall impact on home-based workers.

RECOMMENDATION 6



The Country Office, with support from the Regional Office, should **strengthen its overall results-based management**, including planning, monitoring, data collection, validation and reporting process and establish a holistic approach to strengthening the capacity of both UN Women personnel and its implementing partners in these areas.

CONCLUSION 7

The resource fluctuations and resource gaps experienced by the Country Office during the first half of the Strategic Note period indicate that a more proactive approach to managing relationships with donors and other partners and enhanced planning for resource mobilization are necessary.

The rationale for maintaining Sub-Offices is strong, however, diversification of resources to support sub-office operation should also be prioritized with a view to ensuring business continuity. Proactive thought leadership and strategic visioning for the office ahead of the development of the new Strategic Note should be continued.]

Partners and UN Women personnel also pointed towards UN Women's global mandate to work with civil society as an added value but saw room for strengthening this aspect in Pakistan. Stakeholders saw huge potential for UN Women to step in and leverage the already strong capacity of civil society in Pakistan.

RECOMMENDATION 7



Finalize and implement the resource mobilization strategy of the Country Office with realistic targets as a part of its advocacy vision and strategy (see Recommendation 1). Regularly monitor the strategy for effectiveness, revise if necessary and address any related implications.



Photo ©UN Women/Anam Abbas

INTRODUCTION

1. Pakistan country context

Background

Pakistan is a federation consisting of four provinces (Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh), and three federal territories/areas (Federal Capital, Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan Administered Kashmir). Against the backdrop of its 18th Constitutional Amendment (2010), Pakistan is a decentralized State with federal and local governance systems in place. Pakistan is now the world's fifth most populous country and the second among South Asian countries.

Gender inequality is of significant concern in Pakistan. It ranks 151 out of 153 on the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2020 and is placed at 150 in economic participation, 143 in educational attainment, 149 in health and survival and 93 in political empowerment.¹ Pakistan's Vision 2025, which is in line with OP III and the UNSCDF, prioritizes basic rights and gender equality as central tenets of the country's development. Pakistan has ratified seven international frameworks on human rights and gender equality. It has also affirmed its dedication to women's rights through the National Plan of Action for Women (1998), the National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women (2002), and the creation of national and provincial Women's Parliamentary Caucuses (2008) and the National Commission on the Status of Women Act (2012). Following a landmark Supreme Court ruling in 2009, the transgender community was accorded greater legal protection, with computerized national identity cards reflecting their gender identity and the 2017 census counting the transgender population for the first time. The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (2018) has declared rights guaranteed in the constitution such as fundamental rights to be applicable to transgender persons as well.

Despite the Government of Pakistan's stated policy and ongoing endeavours towards advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the country, the pace of progress remains uneven with constant challenges. Gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence occur at high rates. According to the 2017–2018 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey, approximately 29 per cent of women experienced physical or sexual violence. Of these, 23 per cent experienced only physical violence, 1 per cent experienced only sexual violence, and 5 per cent experienced both physical and sexual violence. About 34 per cent of women who have been married have experienced spousal violence, whether physical, sexual or emotional.



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According to the 2017–2018 Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey, approximately **29 per cent of women** experienced **physical or sexual violence**.



The pandemic has further **compounded pre-existing gender inequalities**. the socioeconomic impacts can be seen through loss of income/ livelihoods and limited access to protection services and health care.

Rural women are more likely to experience violence (30 per cent) than urban women (24 per cent). Women with disabilities or those belonging to ethnic or religious minority groups are faced with a higher risk of experiencing violence.

Pakistan ranks 154 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).² The decade long struggle against terrorism and extremism continues to impose immense social, economic and human costs calculated at over US\$118 billion. With concerted efforts by the state and the military, the overall security and law and order situation in Pakistan has steadily improved since UN Women's last programme cycle (2013–2017). However, it is still volatile, and any deterioration will undermine progress on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has delayed progress in gender equality and women's empowerment in the country and has hindered the Country Office's programme implementation. A recent survey³ suggests that the socioeconomic impacts can be seen through loss of income/ livelihoods and limited access to protection services and health care. Incidents of violence against women have risen during the pandemic. The burden of unpaid care and domestic work has increased for women and girls. Furthermore, women and girls who are already experiencing institutionalized poverty, gender-based and other forms of discrimination are particularly at risk. The pandemic has further compounded pre-existing gender inequalities.⁴

1 World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index Report 2021. http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf

2 UNDP. Human Development Report. Latest Human Development Index ranking. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/latest-human-development-index-ranking>

3 UN Women. 'Survey shows that COVID-19 has gendered effects in Asia and Pacific', 29 April 2020, accessed online <https://data.unwomen.org/resources/surveys-show-covid-19-has-gendered-effects-asia-and-pacific-on-18-march-2021>.

4 Pakistan Brief: United Nations Response to COVID-19 in Pakistan. 13 July 2020. Accessed online: https://pakistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/UN%20Pakistan%20response%20to%20COVID-19-Update_13July2020.pdf.

2. UN Women in Pakistan

Background

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) preceded UN Women with an office in Pakistan since 2007. The Strategic Note is the main planning tool for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through UN Women's support to normative, coordination and operational work and is designed to align with UN Women's Global Strategic Plan, in addition to United Nations country-level outcomes and national priorities for development, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Strategic Note 2018–2022

The Country Office programme comprises four impact areas and nine outcomes in the Strategic Note 2018–2022 cycle. The proposed programme contributes to the following overarching goal: "Women and girls have better access to and ability to exercise their rights in Pakistan." However, some changes were made in the proposed programme. One impact area (Impact 5) and one outcome (Outcome 5.1) were added in the Annual Work Plan for 2019. Outcome 1.2 was removed in the Annual Work Plan for 2020. Thus, there were 9 outcome areas in 2018, 10 in 2019 and 9 in 2020.

Normative and coordination efforts

The Country Office's normative area of work was cross-cutting throughout all thematic areas. The Country Office provided technical support and capacity-building to the Government to amend, develop and pass plans and policies to address women's economic empowerment and to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. The Country Office also supported the Government in upholding its commitments to international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing+25 Plan of Action.

As the lead convener for Outcome 8 (Gender, Equality and Dignity) of the UNSCDF, UN Women coordinated the efforts of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population

Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNDP to achieve this end. UN Women worked to facilitate gender mainstreaming across the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), led coordination mechanisms and provided external coordination support to governmental and non-governmental partners to implement and report against international commitments and advocated for policy change.

Financial and human resources

The mobilized budget of the Country Office for 2018–2021 was US\$16 million against a planned budget of US\$20.1 million for the period. The total planned budget reached a high of US\$6.7 million in 2019 but decreased to US\$4.1 million in 2021. The Core Budget and Institutional Budget remained constant over the period, while Non-Core Budget decreased between 2018 and 2021. At present, the Country Office is staffed by 14 fixed-term positions.

Key donors during the Strategic Note period included the European Commission, the Government of the United States of America, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF), the Government of Norway, and UNICEF.

Key partners

A comprehensive human-rights based stakeholder analysis is presented in Annex 5.2. The Country Office worked with a diverse range of local and international partners, including United Nations partners, donors, the Government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society organizations (CSOs), and was active in engaging groups of women from ethnic minority communities, women with disabilities, women engaged in the informal sector, women in rural areas, home-based workers and transgender communities. Other stakeholder groups included duty bearers such as the federal and provincial government departments that the Country Office has engaged with over the Strategic Note period for implementation as well as other United Nations agencies that are joint programme partners. Secondary duty bearers, which are affected by the Strategic Note but not targeted, include the Inter-Agency Gender and Development Group, the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) and special interest groups such as youth groups and disability organizations.



Overarching goal of the Country Office programme

"Women and girls have better access to and ability to exercise their rights in Pakistan."



Strategic Note 2018–2022

The Country Office programme comprises 4 impact areas and 9 outcomes in the Strategic Note 2018–2022 cycle.



Budget and Human Resources

The mobilized budget for 2018–2021 was US\$16 million. The Country Office is staffed by 14 fixed-term positions.

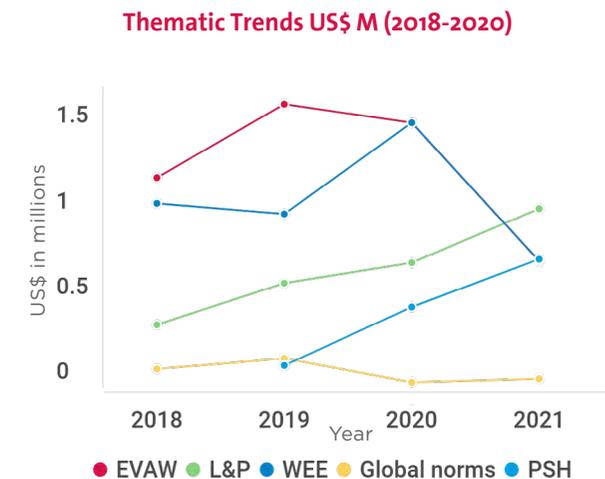
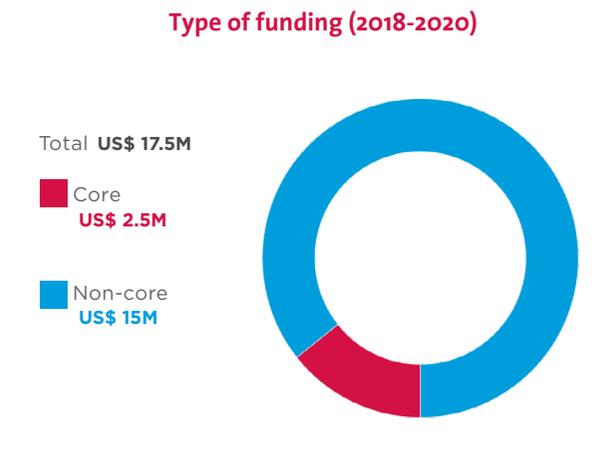
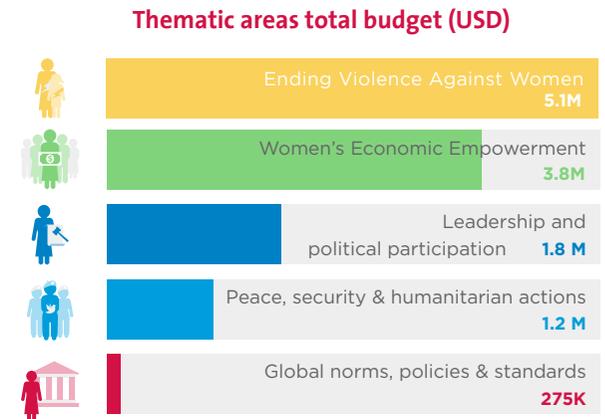
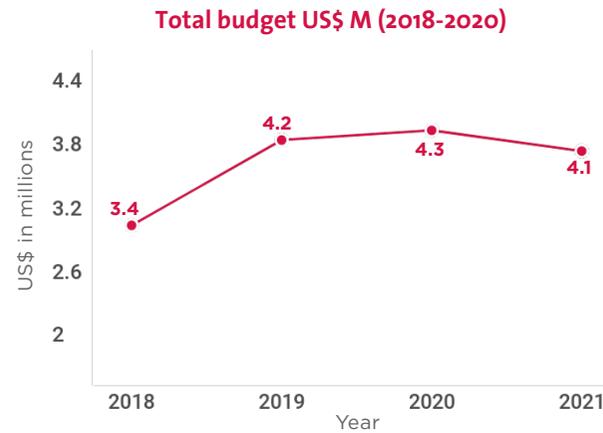
UN WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

16 M

US\$ total budget
mobilized for
2018–2021

51

**Total Country
Office workforce**
including 14 fixed-
term positions



3. CPE+A purpose, objectives, scope and methodology

Purpose

IEAS conducted this CPE+A to assess the contributions of UN Women in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan over the course of its Strategic Note 2018–2022 to support enhanced accountability for development effectiveness and learning from experience. IEAS combined the internal audit with the CPE to streamline the evaluation and audit processes in the same country, increase the usefulness and impact of these important exercises and, very importantly, to reduce the burden on the Country Office.

The purpose of the CPE+A was to provide an independent and systematic assessment of the contributions made by UN Women to development results with respect to gender equality at country level to feed into learning on what strategies work well and what needs strengthening. A secondary purpose was to identify UN Women's comparative advantages in Pakistan and support decision-making for the Country Office strategy moving forward. The evaluation also aimed to provide useful information to the evaluation of OP III, managed by the Resident Coordinators Office (RCO), and insight on the strategic direction for UN Women Pakistan within the context of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, as adopted by General Assembly resolution 72/279 on 31 May 2018.⁵ Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this evaluation aimed to capture how UN Women is responding to the crisis and analyse how the organization can best support efforts in the country moving forward.

Evaluation and internal audit scope

The entire programme of work and integrated mandate of UN Women were assessed, including the organization's contributions in the operational, coordination and normative spheres. The geographic scope included all locations where UN Women has worked. The Country Office has sub-offices in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and project presences in Punjab and Sindh. With an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in March 2021, and the security situation in Balochistan⁶ and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including the Newly Merged Districts in April 2021, travel precautions had been reinstated in various locations, which limited the possibility of in-person data collection for this CPE+A.

Methodology

The CPE+A employed a non-experimental, theory-based approach.⁷ The CPE+A undertook case studies on the Sub-Office architecture and capacity-building approach of the Country Office. The analysis focused on a forward-looking and appreciative exploration of how UN Women can best leverage these areas moving forward. UN Women's contribution to leaving no one behind, including the most marginalized groups such as women with disabilities and people of diverse sexual orientation, was also the focus of analysis. One project was selected for an in-depth look at these aspects. Nevertheless, the entire programme of work and UN Women's integrated mandate were assessed, including its contributions in the operational, coordination and normative spheres. With a focus towards utilization by stakeholders, the CPE+A was tailored to the needs of UN Women and employed a participatory approach that included stakeholder perspectives throughout each phase. The evaluation was also human rights-based and gender-responsive in analysing UN Women's contributions towards outcomes by ensuring a focus on underlying social norms and barriers to achieving gender equality and women's empowerment (see Annex 6 and Annex 10). This assessment answers the key questions and sub-questions as defined in the evaluation and audit matrix (see Annex 4). The evaluation applied OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability) and a human rights and gender equality criterion.

Data collection and analysis

The ongoing COVID-19 global health emergency caused unprecedented issues for the evaluation, resulting in delays and reliance on remote data collection using a mixed-methods approach (see Annex 6.3). Nevertheless, multiple sources of data were obtained: 77 stakeholders from across stakeholder groups were consulted (28 males, 49 females), along with 2 focus group discussions and 1 personnel survey with a 72 per cent response rate (18 out of 25 respondents, comprising 6 males and 12 females). The plan for adhering to ethical guidance was outlined in the inception report and is aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group Ethical Guidance and WHO guidelines on research with women affected by violence. Stakeholders were provided information about the purpose and use of the evaluation and assurances about the confidentiality of the information provided.

5 United Nations General Assembly, Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, A/Res/72/279 (31 May 2018), available from <http://undocs.org/a/res/72/279>.

6 BBC, Pakistan hotel bombing, 22 April 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56834937>.

7 A detailed note on the methodology can be found in Annex 6.

Rights holders were consulted about whether they were in a safe space to speak, and their oral consent was requested. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to opt out of participation or skip any questions. The data management plan outlined in the inception report provides details on how information was collected and stored securely to ensure confidentiality. Multiple methods of data collection and analysis were carried out using both primary and secondary data to triangulate evidence, including desk review, quantitative and qualitative analysis (see Annex 6.3) and by using NVivo software (a qualitative data analysis tool). This was summarized in an evidence map (a snapshot is available in Annex 8).

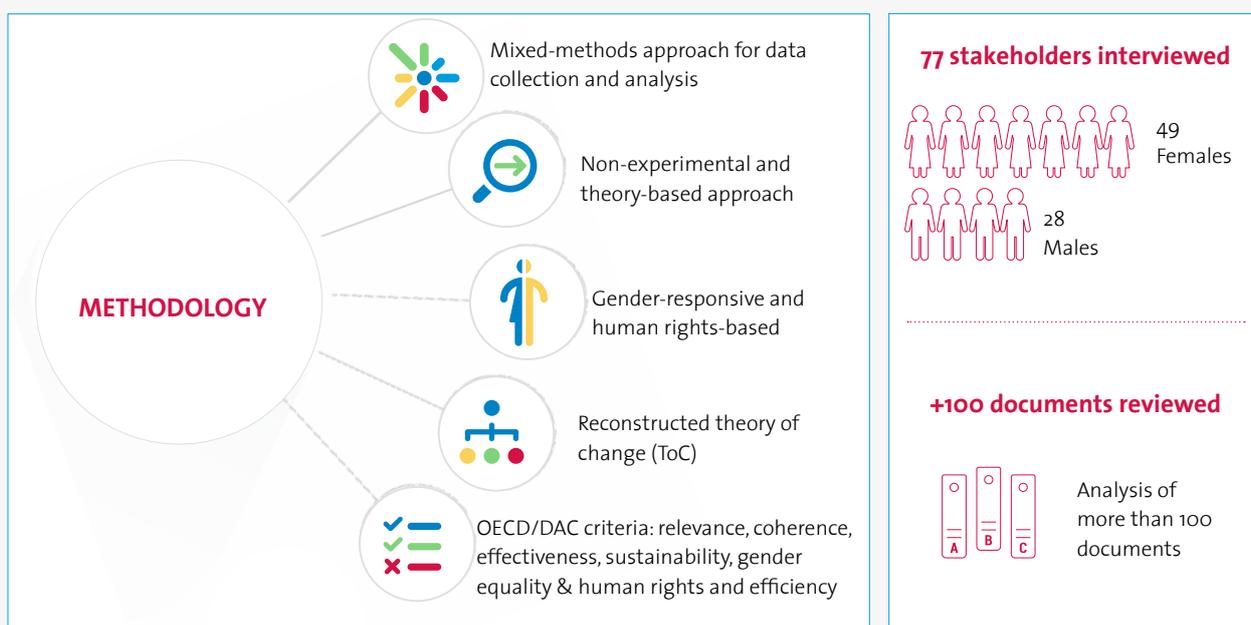
Limitations

Given the current COVID-19 and security situation, the use of participatory methods was limited and travel restrictions also limited the possibility of in-person data collection. Due to COVID-19 and security travel restrictions, the team relied on the accuracy and completeness of the documents provided by the Country Office with independent verification of the information provided, where possible.

While overall, the CPE+A consulted a large number and diverse range of stakeholders, unfortunately, a few key stakeholders were not reached due to non-response; and there is often personnel changes within organizations and government institutions, so some stakeholders consulted were new to their positions. To avoid biases raised, the information has been triangulated and validated with the Country Office and the Evaluation Reference Group. However, generalizations should be avoided.

4. CPE+A governance and quality assurance

UN Women evaluations follow established mechanisms to ensure high-quality evaluation processes and products in line with the UN Women Evaluation Policy and Handbook and according to the established norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group. All products are subject to quality review by the IEAS Director, Chief of Evaluation, a peer reviewer, the Evaluation Reference Group and the Evaluation Management Group. The Evaluation Reference Group included UN Women programme staff, national and provincial government



Systems reviewed
OneApp Dashboard, DAMs, ATLAS and RMS

1 survey conducted
Survey of UN Women Pakistan CO personnel (72% response rate, including 6 males and 12 females)

2 virtual case studies
Capacity-building; Sub-office architecture and Joint Programmes



Photo ©UN Women/Faria Salman

FINDINGS

RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

Is UN Women's thematic focus and strategy for implementation the most relevant and coherent approach for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment?

FINDING 1

Country Office work is aligned with international commitments; however, its Strategic Note does not accurately reflect its programmatic focus. The Strategic Note is attempting to address too many thematic priorities, and some sub-themes that were priorities in the past or were under resourced may need to be re-examined to ensure alignment with current priorities and needs in Pakistan and with the new UN Women Strategic Plan and United Nations system efforts in Pakistan (UNSDF).

The Strategic Note of Pakistan outlines four to five thematic priorities (depending on the year), covering most impact areas of the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2022, despite guidance by the UN Women Programme Division to prioritize two to three thematic areas to ensure the organization is not spreading itself too thinly.⁸ Although the Strategic Note allocates funds to these thematic areas, Country Office work and organizational structure is focused in two areas, each managed by one portfolio manager: (1) Ending Violence against Women and

(2) gender-responsive Women's Economic Empowerment. Ending Violence Against Women has been the thematic and financial focus of the office, with US\$5.1 million, or 40 per cent of the total Development Results Framework (DRF) budget (excluding Organisational Effectiveness and Efficiency (OEEF) budget) in the period 2018–2021. Women's Economic Empowerment has been the other key focus area of the Country Office, with US\$3.4 million, or 27 per cent the total budget (DRF) in the period 2018–2021.

TABLE 1. Budget by thematic area 2018–2021

Strategic Plan Thematic Area	Budget 2018 (US\$)	Budget 2019 (US\$)	Budget 2020 (US\$)	Budget 2021 (US\$)	TOTAL
SP1 – Women's Political Empowerment (WPE)	353,480	585,350	714,504	1,028,107	2,681,441
SP2 – Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE)	1,057,467	1,000,212	870,590	823,855	3,752,124
SP3 – Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW)	1,215,472	1,640,359	1,532,618	720,459	5,108,908
SP4 – Women, Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action (WPSH)		110,407	454,253	733,845	1,298,505
SP5 – Planning and Budgeting (P&B)			0	0	-
SP6 – Global Norms, Policies and Standards	92,928	149,596	9,423	25,000	276,947
Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework (OEEF)	700,022	772,269	784,006	838,238	3,094,535
Unmapped	13,084	-			13,084
TOTAL	3,432,453	4,258,193	4,365,394	4,169,504	16,225,544

Source: Compiled by the IEAS team based on the UN Women Results Management System (may vary from Atlas).

UN Women's thematic areas are inextricably linked (i.e. women's economic empowerment can lead to ending violence against women), and enhanced cross-thematic coordination is encouraged. Both UN Women headquarters and the Regional Office emphasized this type of coordination in the draft UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025.⁹ The Country Office attempted to address this by placing projects from different thematic areas under one manager. The CPE team mapped the projects assigned to each of the two thematic portfolio managers to assess the alignment with the thematic area.¹⁰

As Table 1 demonstrates, under the Ending Violence Against Women thematic area, 50 per cent of projects were directly related to this work, while the other 50 per cent of projects could be classified under other UN Women Strategic Plan thematic areas (Governance and Planning and Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action). Under the Women's Economic Empowerment portfolio, most projects were related to this work, except for the Prevention of Violent Extremism project, which is aligned with the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action thematic area. The approach of placing other thematic area projects under one thematic portfolio manager has rather limited the coherence of the Country Office's approach. This approach also raises the risk that technical staff profiles might not adequately support such varied thematic areas.

On the other hand, the Country Office attempted to mainstream activities that are represented by other thematic areas into project-level interventions, which was a more coherent approach and should be taken forward. For example, Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting, which is aligned with the Governance and Planning thematic area, was mainstreamed by both the access to justice and home-based workers projects. This latter approach is more coherent, as activities are embedded in the approach of each thematic area.

The evaluation team also assessed the Country Office priorities against the UN Women Strategic Plan, OP III (United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)) and several provincial strategies. Overall, on a

broad thematic level there was high alignment between the selected thematic areas. However, at the sub-thematic level prioritization and coherence with the UN Women Strategic Plan could be enhanced. For example, although Ending Violence Against Women is the overarching theme, child marriage has been given a lot of attention, mainly through the AAWAZ programme funded by DFID. UN Women reported contributing to progress in legislative action aimed at ending child marriage, including through the generation of evidence to support advocacy through a [Costing Study](#).¹¹ While it is an important area of work, UN Women does not identify child marriage as one of its global priorities, probably because other United Nations agencies have a long-standing history of working on this topic, along with substantial organizational resources to support country-level efforts.¹² The United Nations and donors also noted overlap with respect to child marriage, noting that UNFPA was seen as the global lead along with UNICEF in this area. Similarly, with respect to Women's Economic Empowerment, home-based workers has been the sub-thematic focus of work in Pakistan for the past 10 years, along with some efforts to engage the private sector in adopting the Women's Empowerment Principles. While the Country Office has contributed significantly towards outcome-level change in both areas (see Finding 7), the stakeholders consulted for this evaluation identified an opportunity to broaden the scope of Women's Economic Empowerment efforts by continuing to strengthen work with the private sector, i.e. small- and medium-sized enterprises, by increasing access to financing and entrepreneurial skills. Stakeholders also identified an opportunity for the Country Office to analyse existing legislation from a Women's Economic Empowerment lens. The UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025 proposes a focus on unpaid care work. Thus, this is a good opportunity for the Country Office to reprioritize its efforts in line with solid evidence on needs, as informed by consultations with stakeholders about their priorities and in alignment with the global UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025. This is not to say that the Country Office should not engage at all with partners on those topics, but the strategic priorities require refocusing.

9 UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025: <https://undocs.org/UNW/2021/6>.

10 In addition, the audit team identified the number of personnel dedicated to each thematic area.

11 UN Women Pakistan, Costing Study on Child Marriage: A Country Level Report 2020-21; <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/06/costing-study-on-child-marriage-a-country-level-report-2020-21>.

12 UNICEF and UNFPA joint global programme on ending child marriage reported expenditures of approximately US\$51.4 million and US\$32.4 million respectively during the period 2016–2019; https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/GP_2020_Phase_I_Report.pdf. UN Women was in negotiations to potentially enter into the global joint programme, however, decided to not engage; the evaluation team doesn't have information on the rationale behind this decision. UNICEF also has a data portal dedicated to child marriage: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/child-marriage/>.

FIGURE 1. Thematic area financial overview and project list

Ending Violence Against Women Portfolio 2018–2021		Women's Economic Empowerment Portfolio 2018–2021	
	Expenditures totalled US\$5.1 million , or 40 per cent of the total budget (DRF) , (not including the Rule of Law 2021 project)		Expenditures totalled US\$ 3.8 million , or 26 per cent of the total budget (DRF)
Ending Violence Against Women Projects	Thematic Area	Women's Economic Empowerment Projects	Thematic Area
Prevention and Protection of Women from Violence Through Access to Justice, Services and Safe Public Spaces (2016–2020) (US\$3.5 million, United States of America – Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (US-INL)	Governance and planning	Economic Empowerment of Women Home-Based Workers and Excluded Groups in Pakistan (2017–2020) (US\$2.3 million, Government of Norway)	Women's Economic Empowerment
Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence, Phases II and III (2017–2019; 2020–2022) (US\$900,000, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia)	Ending Violence Against Women	Stimulating Equal Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs (2017–2022) (US\$100,000, Procter & Gamble)	Women's Economic Empowerment
Empowering and Protecting Pakistan's Youth, Women, Girls and Boys Today for a Developed Tomorrow (2018–2020) (AAWAZ-II) (US\$1.4 million, Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom/ UNICEF)	Ending Violence Against Women	Moving from Charity Right Based Work - Delivering as One for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Women with Disabilities (2018–2020) (US\$400,000, MPTF)	Women's Economic Empowerment
Identification and Redressal of Gender-Based Violence in Refugee and Host Populations through Community-Based Mechanisms (2020–2021, US\$175,000, Central Emergency Response Fund)	Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Newly Merged Districts Support Programme (2019–2020) (US\$1.1 million, MPTF)	Women's Economic Empowerment
Promoting Rule of Law and Enhancing the Criminal Justice System in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Newly Merged Districts and Balochistan (TBD 2021–2025) (US\$5.47 million, European Union) (New project)	Governance and Planning	Preventing Violent Extremism - Integrating a Gender Perspective (2019–2022) (US\$1.2 million, European Union)	Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action

Source: Compiled by the IES team from the UN Women Donor Management System and Atlas.

The Country Office initiated a visioning process during the period of the CPE (late 2020/early 2021) and shared several versions of the vision document with the evaluation team. In parallel, UN Women headquarters was drafting the new Strategic Plan 2022–2025. The vision document was a step in the right direction, as such a document can help to increase stakeholders' understanding of the needs and priorities for gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan and how the Country Office priorities align with these. It can also help to identify entry points for collaboration. However, the vision document¹³ outlines three broad thematic priorities that are not all clearly aligned with the old or new UN Women Strategic Plan, and the basis for the selection of these priorities is unclear. The three thematic priorities are:

1. **Enabling legislative and policy frameworks:** Formulation and implementation of laws that remove barriers for women;
2. **Gender-responsive societies and economies:** Prioritization of socioeconomic empowerment of women;

3. **Women as leaders of change:** Amplification of women's voices and enhancement of their leadership skills.

While it was a valiant effort to attempt to prioritize thematic areas and take a cross-cutting approach under some areas (Ending Violence Against Women is placed under Thematic Priority 1), it is important that the Country Office remains aligned with the global priorities of UN Women as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025¹⁴ so that it can report coherently (e.g. women as leaders of change is now part of governance and participation in public life).

The new UN Women Strategic Plan Thematic Areas remain largely the same moving forward, while the outcome areas present great opportunity to focus on some of the key enablers for gender equality and women's empowerment. The UN Women Pakistan vision should also be clearly informed by research and data on the needs and priorities of women and stakeholder consultations in Pakistan.

What is UN Women's added value vis-à-vis other actors, also considering its response to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic?

FINDING 2

The added value of the Country Office is its gender-specific expertise and focus in Pakistan where gender specific programming and expertise is limited and space for advocating for human rights concerns is constrained yet the need is immense. Overall, there is room for increased visibility and understanding among stakeholders of UN Women's niche within the gender equality and empowerment of women space.

Pakistan is consistently ranked as one of the most gender-unequal countries of the world across indexes (e.g. Global Gender Gap, Human Development Report, and Women, Peace and Security Index). However, development financing of gender-related initiatives remains relatively low. For example, even though Pakistan reportedly has one of the lowest rates of women's labour participation in South Asia, one of the highest rates of maternal and child mortality in South Asia, and one of the lowest rates of gender parity in education in the region, the United Nations system in 2020 reported that only 1 per cent of the US\$461 million in expenditure went towards Outcome 8 of the UNSDF, which is dedicated to Gender, Equality and Dignity (Table 2).¹⁵

Partners across stakeholder types identified the Country Office focus on gender equality and women's empowerment through integrated normative and policy support and research and evidence generation as an area of added value, noting that gender often gets sidelined in Pakistan, even by other United Nations agencies.

Partners and UN Women personnel also pointed towards UN Women's global mandate to work with civil society as an added value but saw room for strengthening this aspect in Pakistan. Some external and a couple internal UN Women stakeholders consulted characterized UN Women's interactions with civil society as transactional rather than as supporting the women's movement during the period under review and saw huge potential for UN Women to step in and leverage the already strong capacity of civil society in Pakistan (discussed further under Finding 10).

13 The Country Office provided various versions of the vision document, which was in still in draft form.

14 UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025: <https://undocs.org/UNW/2021/6>.

15 <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/UN-ResultsReport-2020-Pakistan.pdf>.

TABLE 2. Expenditure by the Pakistan One United Nations Programme III according to UNSDF Outcome area

Outcome Area	Expenditure (US\$)	% of total expenditure
1: Economic Growth	7,056,230	2%
2: Decent Work	30,140,466	7%
3: Health and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	237,188,158	51%
4: Nutrition	30,577,788	7%
5: Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture	41,662,938	9%
6: Resilience	16,669,024	4%
7: Education and Learning	22,506,467	5%
8: Gender, Equality and Dignity	5,473,556	1%
9: Governance	48,630,613	11%
10: Social Protection	21,196,661	5%
Total	461,101,903	100%

Source: Pakistan One United Nations Programme III, Annual Report 2020.

A need for greater visibility on the priorities of women in Pakistan based on UN Women evidence and analysis and engagement with civil society, and an understanding of how UN Women is impacting the lives of women and girls through its efforts, was noted across stakeholder types. Stakeholders had some awareness of social media efforts and campaigns supported by the Country Office (e.g. 16 Days of Activism), but knowledge about the broader programme or vision of UN Women beyond the project that they were personally engaged in was limited. Recognizing that UN Women is one of the smallest United Nations agencies operating in Pakistan (see Table 3), the Country Office must identify the most strategic way to engage its partners in amplifying the need for enhanced attention on the underlying discriminatory structures and social norms and harmful practices that create barriers for women's empowerment and progress towards gender equality. Most Country Office projects (72 per cent) are now jointly implemented, which is a step in the right direction.

The Country Office reported that when the new Country Representative came on board, it began working on enhancing visibility among its key stakeholders by proactively reaching out to meet and discuss priorities, which was confirmed by consulted stakeholders, and developing a vision document. However, as noted by the IAS audit, a communications strategy aimed at clarifying UN Women's niche, with clear performance indicators, should be adopted (a communications strategy was drafted in early 2021 during the CPE+A process).

TABLE 3. Reported expenditures by United Nations agencies in Pakistan in 2020

UN agency	Expenditure (US\$)	% Total expenditure
FAO	21,909,107	4.8%
ILO	2,668,854	0.6%
IOM	1,032,000	0.2%
UN Habitat	4,664	0.001%
UNAIDS	95,861	0.02%
UNDP	37,328,294	8.1%
UNESCO	1,940,887	0.4%
UNFPA	10,906,376	2.4%
UNHCR	47,924,098	10.4%
UNICEF	135,838,677	29.5%
UNIDO	6,796,133	1.5%
UNODC	3,939,627	0.9%
UNOPS	23,086,408	5.0%
UN Women	1,270,872	0.3%
WFP	46,457,056	10.1%
WHO	119,902,988	26.0%
TOTAL	461,101,902	100%

Source: Pakistan One United Nations Programme III, Annual Report 2020.

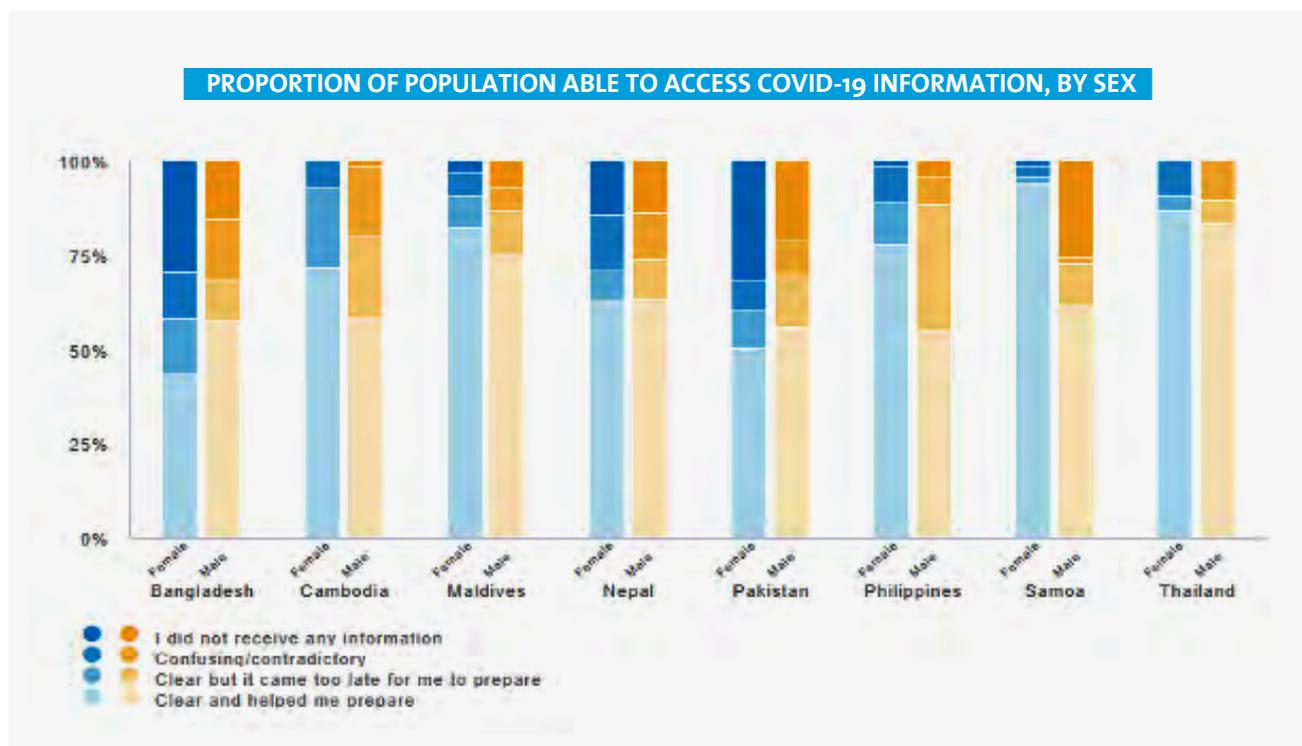
FINDING 3

The Country Office was proactive in its support to the COVID-19 response in addressing key priorities. However, there is still room to enhance capacity as an organization to respond and adapt in a quick and flexible manner in times of crisis.

The CO responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by re-programming its activities to be able to respond more adequately to the immediate needs on the ground and engaged in coordination with key partners from government, civil society and the UN system. In 2020, UN Women led an effort to collect data on how COVID-19 was impacting women and men to inform decision-making. The Regional Office worked with the Country Office on a rapid gender assessment that looked at five areas of concern: 1) economic activities and resources, 2) unpaid domestic and care work, 3) access to goods and services, 4) emotional and physical well-being and 5) relief measures.¹⁶ The rapid survey in Pakistan was conducted in partnership with Jazz mobile phone company, which had the

largest customer share in the country. The information that came out of the survey was highlighted by some partners as a key contribution to informing the United Nations system response efforts during 2020 (see more actions in response to COVID-19 in Box 1). The survey results from Pakistan (2,512 respondents) indicated that women were less likely to receive information about COVID-19 than men and pointed to potential reasons for this inequity being differences in cell phone ownership, access to the Internet and educational attainment. Therefore, the Country Office engaged in radio campaigns with messages on respiratory hygiene, social distancing, coughing etiquette and hand-washing in certain provinces.

FIGURE 2. UN Women rapid assessment survey on the socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19 on women's and men's economic empowerment (23 April 2020)¹⁷



¹⁶ The survey was initiated in March 2020; access the data set here: <https://data.unwomen.org/rga>.

¹⁷ The number of responses from countries were: Bangladesh n=2,296; Cambodia n=1,153; Maldives n=4,730; Nepal n=8,028; Pakistan n=2,512; Philippines n=1,883; Thailand n=5,020. Weights were applied to adjust for age, sex and educational attainment.

Given the lockdown measures, which heightened the need to promote available services in response to gender-based violence,¹⁸ the Country Office collaborated with the Ministry of Human Rights and service providers to enhance accessibility and awareness of available services for survivors or those at risk.

Although the Country Office has been proactive (see Box 1), the visibility of efforts among stakeholders was low. Most stakeholders consulted were unaware of the actions taken by UN Women to respond to COVID-19. Furthermore, some donors and implementing partners consulted identified a need for more flexibility and rapid decision-making with respect to operational matters to be able to respond in a

timely manner. One example provided was the perceived low level of delegation of authority of the Country Office, requiring documents to be signed at regional or head-quarters level, which can slow down implementation. More than half of the personnel (55 per cent or 10 out of 18 personnel) who participated in the CPE-led survey and those consulted felt that there was room for reviewing bottlenecks between the operations and programme teams. Furthermore, the 2021 audit of the Country Office noted, "COVID-19 pandemic related risks have not been incorporated in the risk register. Mitigation action, therefore, did not include emergency response or programme actions to address immediate needs during pandemic."

BOX 1. UN WOMEN PAKISTAN: HIGHLIGHTS FROM REPORTED¹⁹ ACTIVITIES OF UN WOMEN IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19



Reprogrammed **efforts towards the immediate life-saving needs of survivors** of gender-based violence in refugee and host populations.



Engaged in **social media campaigns** with video messages highlighting gendered implications of COVID-19 and radio campaigns with messages on respiratory hygiene, social distancing, coughing etiquette and handwashing in certain provinces.



Encouraged solidarity messages from key private sector companies/signatories of Women Empowerment Principles and identification of income-replacement opportunities for women home-based workers in Sindh; hosted a webinar with key private sector leaders on family-friendly policies and good practices in the workplace.



Produced ethical guidelines (standard operating procedures and a code of conduct) in partnership with UNODC for police and prison officials on how to deal with women patients, survivors of violence against women and prisoners during COVID-19 through the enforcement of precautionary measures using a gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach. **Organized training for police** in Balochistan to sensitize officers on how to manage and report cases of gender-based violence during COVID-19 lockdown. Partnered with UNODC and UNFPA to host a series of webinars for policymakers on the gendered impact of COVID-19 in the law enforcement arena.



Provided **digital literacy training to women home-based workers** as a result of reprogramming during COVID-19.



Women provided with new computerized national identity cards were **made aware of available and relevant social services** that this enabled them to access.



Developed a **sign language video for people with disabilities** to raise awareness of safety measures and share basic information on COVID-19.



Supported agencies working in disaster relief in developing and implementing standard operating procedures for quarantine centres, especially for dealing with women and vulnerable groups. The Country Office also provided support for the distribution of hygiene kits to women, especially in high-risk settings (prisons, shelter homes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Punjab).



Supported the Ministry of Human Rights national helpline to enhance swift redressal support, through integration of a panic button equipped with geotagging, SMS support and inclusion of referral pathways.

Source: Compiled by the evaluation team based on the UN Women Results Management System.

¹⁸ UN Women Pakistan and the Ministry of Human Rights, Gendered Impact and Implications of COVID-19 in Pakistan: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/gendered-impact-and-implications-of-covid-19-in-pakistan> and World Health Organization, Gender-based violence in emergencies, <https://www.who.int/health-cluster/about/work/other-collaborations/gender-based-violence/en/>.

¹⁹ UN Women Annual Report 2020 and action on COVID-19 reported to the Regional Office.

FINDING 4

United Nations partners consulted as part of the evaluation value the mandate of UN Women. However, despite a high number of joint programmes, coordination has been challenged by overlapping efforts between some UN partners in the past and the lack of a broad gender coordination strategy. However, the Country Office began efforts to prioritize this area in 2020. The new UNSDF process presents a strategic opportunity for identifying synergies and a clear division of labour between agencies working on gender equality and women’s empowerment based on comparative advantage and aligned with global priorities.

In alignment with UN Women’s mandate on United Nations system coordination for gender equality and women’s empowerment, the Country Office leads and coordinates Outcome 8 (Gender, Equality and Dignity) of the UNSDF, guides the UNCT on gender mainstreaming, and co-chairs the Performance Management Team of OP III, the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Gender Equality and Pakistan’s Inter-Agency Gender and Development Group to coordinate and promote programming on gender equality and women’s empowerment, with particular emphasis on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and UN Women priority themes. Since 2018, 7 out of the 11 projects (72 per cent) that the Country Office has worked on were joint projects with United Nations agencies (far surpassing the 30 per cent target set by UN Women). In addition, the Country Office collaborated with the Resident

Coordinator’s Office and United Nations agencies in developing joint knowledge products. The Country Office contributed to joint advocacy for normative processes related to gender equality and women’s empowerment in Pakistan and supported the Government and UNCT in reporting on CEDAW, in the preparation of the Beijing+25 review and in the conduct of the Voluntary National Review in 2019. It also contributed to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights reporting in 2020. Furthermore, the Country Office reported in the third quarter of 2020 that it provided strategic support on enhancing United Nations system gender parity among personnel and supporting personnel suffering from domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. United Nations stakeholders interviewed identified this as a key contribution of the Country Office.

TABLE 4. UN Women Pakistan joint projects implemented in 2018–2021

Joint Project Name	Partnering UN Agencies
Empowering and Protecting Pakistan’s Youth, Women, Girls and Boys Today for a Developed Tomorrow	UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women
Joint Global Programme on Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence Phase II and Phase III	WHO, UNODC, UNFPA, UN Women
Identification and Redressal of Gender-Based Violence in Refugee and Host Populations through Community-Based Mechanisms	OCHA, UNFPA, UN Women
Moving from Charity Right Based Work - Delivering as One for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and Women with Disabilities	ILO, UN Volunteers, UN Women
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Newly Merged Districts Support Programme	FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women
Preventing Violent Extremism - Integrating a Gender Perspective	UNOCT, OHCHR and the United Nations entities participating in UNGCTC
Promoting Rule of Law and Enhancing the Criminal Justice System in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Newly Merged Districts and Balochistan	UNODC, UNDP, UN Women

Source: UN Women Donor Management System and Results Management System.

United Nations system partners that were consulted by the evaluation team acknowledged the global mandate of UN Women as well as its expertise, especially in the normative aspect of mainstreaming gender in legislation and policy.²⁰ Some United Nations stakeholders consulted appreciated the advisory support provided by the Country Office in building their capacity in the practical aspects of gender-responsive programming. However, it was also expressed that there are some overlapping areas of work with United Nations sister agencies (see Finding 1).

For instance, some key informants see overlap and competition with UNFPA, particularly in areas relating to child marriage, gender-based violence and ending violence against women. The CPE desk review also noted that both UNFPA and UN Women have a focus on building capacities of the national and provincial commissions on the status of women. Some key informants also expressed that UN Women has a wider scope for intervention and potential in the women’s economic empowerment and women, peace and security spheres.

²⁰ Interviews were conducted with seven representatives from different United Nations agencies, in addition to two group discussions.

UN Women personnel reported that discussions between UN Women and UNFPA helped to devise a plan for division of labor, particularly when it comes to joint programmes.. Concern about the lack of coordination and information-sharing with United Nations partners at the local and provincial level was also voiced, especially given that the Country Office has sub-office presences in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan that can help other United Nations agencies in fulfilling their mandate at the provincial level. Reliance on social networks to learn about Country Office activities was highlighted by certain United Nations stakeholders. The Country Office reported that attempts were made to enhance coordination during the COVID-19 pandemic with respect to the provincial level. The Country Office noted that in 2021 the gender theme group model was being replicated at provincial level (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Sindh), which will contribute to enhanced coordination at provincial level on gender equality efforts. Despite the attempts of the Country Office in the past, the persistence of the issues is indicative of the need to enhance the overall coordination strategy.

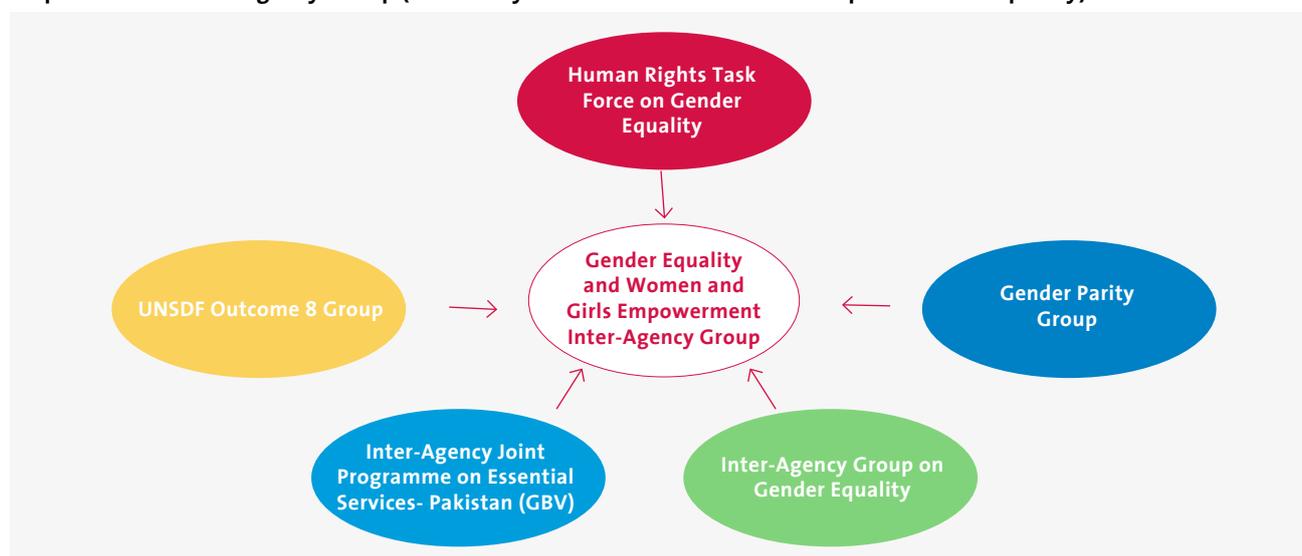
Furthermore, the survey of Country Office personnel led by the CPE team identified that over half of the respondents (56 per cent, or 10 out of 18 respondents) expressed that the capacity-building efforts aimed at the United Nations system were only “somewhat effective” and that there was scope for improvement in the Country Office’s coordination role within the United Nations system (see survey summary in Annex 9). With no formal coordination strategy in place, the activities prioritized by the Country Office and its approach remain unclear, resulting in the risk of duplication or lack of a coordinated approach among actors.

As the lead of the Outcome 8 Working Group, the Country Office collated information from different agencies to track progress under Outcome 8 of the UNSDF.

United Nations partners noted that although the Country Office engaged in systematizing information through a meticulous follow-up process, the interactions of gender equality groups (of which there were multiple; see Figure 3) were limited to knowledge-sharing and reporting. Partners expected the Country Office to play a more strategic and pivotal role in technical assistance to United Nations agencies regarding gender equality and women’s empowerment. United Nations stakeholders highlighted the need for the Country Office to carve out its niche as the agency with gender expertise that can help other United Nations agencies design and implement programmes that take into consideration a gender lens. The lack of a UNCT-System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard, coupled with the evaluation team’s assessment that the UNSDF indicators meet only the minimum requirements when it comes to measuring changes in gender equality (see Annex 15 for detailed analysis), makes it evident that there is room to strengthen overall gender mainstreaming in the UNSDF. The Country Office noted that it will continue advocating for undertaking the SWAP and may require Regional Office support.

The Country Office, however, is prioritizing this area. Challenges in relationships with other United Nations agencies is now improving. Under the leadership of UN Women, a single umbrella coordination group — the Gender Equality and Women and Girls Empowerment Inter-Agency Group (see Figure 3) — was formed in early 2021 to serve as an inter-agency coordination mechanism to strengthen the performance of the UNCT in Pakistan on gender equality by providing policy advice, coordination on programming issues within the UNSDF, and technical support on gender equality and women’s empowerment and rights. The Annual Work Plan for 2020 aims to advocate for UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard and gender parity; however, the scorecard has yet to be completed.²¹

FIGURE 3: Gender platforms consolidated to form the Gender Equality and Women and Girls Empowerment Inter-Agency Group (commonly known as the Thematic Group on Gender Equality)



Source: IES team.

EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

To what extent have UN Women's contributions across its integrated mandate advanced gender equality and the empowerment of women in Pakistan, including through the United Nations system and OP III?

FINDING 5

The Country Office strategy of contributing to evidence generation, providing technical expertise and leveraging relationships with key decision-makers and influencers has contributed to normative and policy-level change for gender equality and women's empowerment in line with the aim of OP III. Moving forward, some partners are calling for greater focus on adjusting existing laws, rather than creating new, women-specific legislation, and supporting partners in implementation.

Country Office work in support of normative and policy-level change was under one dedicated impact area but also mainstreamed across all impact areas of the Strategic Note and aligned with the outcomes of OP III. On the one hand, the Country Office fulfils its key normative roles by supporting governmental reporting on key international human rights treaties; on the other hand, it works to support the translation of these international norms into domestic policy and action. As defined in its Strategic Note (Impact 1), the Country Office aims for national and local stakeholders to ensure an enabling environment is in place to translate, monitor and report on implementation of commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment, aligned with global norms, policies and standards. For example, the Country Office supported the national and provincial commissions on the status of women in monitoring compliance with these commitments under CEDAW and contributed to the UNCT's periodic confidential CEDAW report. The Country Office also supported attendance to forums to discuss progress against international normative frameworks, such as the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. The Country Office supported the Government in the preparation of the Beijing+25 review and in the conduct of the Voluntary National Review in 2019 and contributed to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights reporting in 2020.

BOX 2. INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Pakistan is a signatory to key international frameworks on human rights:

- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
- United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security
- The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In line with the aims of UNSDF (Box 3), the Country Office has played an active role in translating these international commitments, focusing on the promulgation of laws related to gender equality and women's empowerment as a fundamental aspect of its work. In 2010, the 18th Amendment to the Pakistan Constitution devolved powers to the provincial level for promulgating laws and framing policies under the overall guidance of the Constitution of Pakistan, and its international obligations. With respect to legislation on gender equality and women's empowerment, this responsibility lies with the Federal Ministry and Commission of Human Rights, the provincial Women's Development Departments, and the national and provincial commissions on the status of women across the country, which are UN Women's key partners as the gender machinery in Pakistan.

BOX 3. UNSDF OUTCOMES (OP III)

The Country Office primarily contributed to UNSDF outcomes (OP III):

- Outcome 2 on Decent Work (SDG 8): "By 2022, the people in Pakistan, especially women and youth, have improved access to productive livelihoods, income opportunities and decent work".
- Outcome 8 on Gender, Equality and Dignity (SDG 5): "By 2022, government institutions will have increased accountability towards gender equality commitments and social, economic, cultural and political rights".

The CPE identified three key strategies employed by the Country Office that were successful in supporting the translation of international norms into domestic policy action. One example is provided in Box 4.

Further examples of policy contribution are discussed under Finding 7, including:

1. Contributing to **evidence generation** (research, knowledge products, meetings);
2. **Leveraging partnerships and relationships** with key decision-makers and influencers (through awareness-raising, training or communications campaigns);
3. Providing **technical support** to the drafting of legislation (through consultant expertise).

With reference to high quality evidence generated by the Country Office (e.g. gap analysis of ending violence against women legislation²²), a few stakeholders consulted identified the need to continue strengthening the Country Office focus on analysing the gaps in existing legislation that is not necessarily specific to women (i.e. labour code) to ensure legislation adequately addresses the priorities and needs of women.

BOX 4. DEDICATION TO HOME-BASED WORKERS HAS RESULTED IN POLICY CHANGE IN AT LEAST ONE PROVINCE

Since 2008, the Country Office, with the financial support of the Government of Norway, has engaged through three consecutive projects in advocating for the rights of home-based workers and supporting their individual capacity development with the aim of realizing their rights and economical empowerment. The most recent project was initiated in 2017 and is still ongoing in 2021, with a total budget of approximately US\$3.1 million. Through three key strategies, the Country Office has been able to influence policy-level change: the Government of Sindh enacted the Sindh Home-Based Workers Act 2018 and endorsed its Rules of Business in 2020. It also set up a fund, contributing approximately US\$118,000 to ensure social support to home-based workers. Through this act, Sindh became the first province to recognize the work of home-based workers as on par with other workers of the formal economy. However, due to budgetary challenges, the Management Information System and registration process of home-based workers has not yet been taken forward. With regard to other provinces, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is considering the Home-Based Workers Act, and progress on such legislation in Punjab and Balochistan has been slow.*

Strategies that enabled the ability of the Country Office to influence policy-level change include:

1. Contributing to evidence generation: Dedication to the subject since 2008 has enabled the collection of key information about the needs and priorities of home-based workers. A survey of home-based workers also contributed to knowledge on demographics and living conditions.
2. Leveraging partnerships with key decision-makers and influencers: The external evaluation of the home-based workers project identified that three politicians in Sindh played a pivotal role in collaboration with HomeNet Pakistan and other CSOs and recognized their support as critical in the approval processes. The evaluation also identified the need to invest further in engaging with legislators and senior decision-makers in the other provinces (Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan).
3. Providing technical support to drafting legislation: The Country Office hired technical expertise to support the drafting of the Home-Based Workers Act in Sindh.

*UN Women Pakistan, Evaluation of Economic Empowerment of Women Home-Based Workers and Excluded Groups in Pakistan, 2021.

Source: Compiled by the IES team based on UN Women Results Management System reports, external evaluation project report and donor reports.

FINDING 6

One of the most effective strategies of the Country Office has been its advocacy and communications campaigns. In terms of reach, and in combination with other efforts, contributions to policy-level change are notable. However, without an office-wide communications strategy that is aligned with the programmatic interventions of the Country Office, the potential to understand the results and their transformational potential is limited. Furthermore, careful consideration of who is selected as the “voice” of campaign efforts should be prioritized in the future.

The Country Office has primarily engaged in communications campaigns related to child marriage (even prior to the AAWAZ project, for which it received specific funding). However, project-level advocacy initiatives and communications campaigns were not always leveraging synergies or coordinated. The lack of coordination affected the ability of the Country Office to understand the broader contributions of its campaigns to results for women and girls.

A comprehensive approach that links various efforts of the Country Office has the potential for greater impact. For instance, combining the Bridal Uniform campaign (funded through core and pro-bono partnership) with mobilization and policy-level engagement on child marriage undertaken as part of the AAWAZ-II programme may have contributed to policy-level change.²³

²² UN Women, Gap analysis of legislation related to ending violence against women, 2020. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/08/gap-analysis-of-legislation-related-to-ending-violence-against-women>

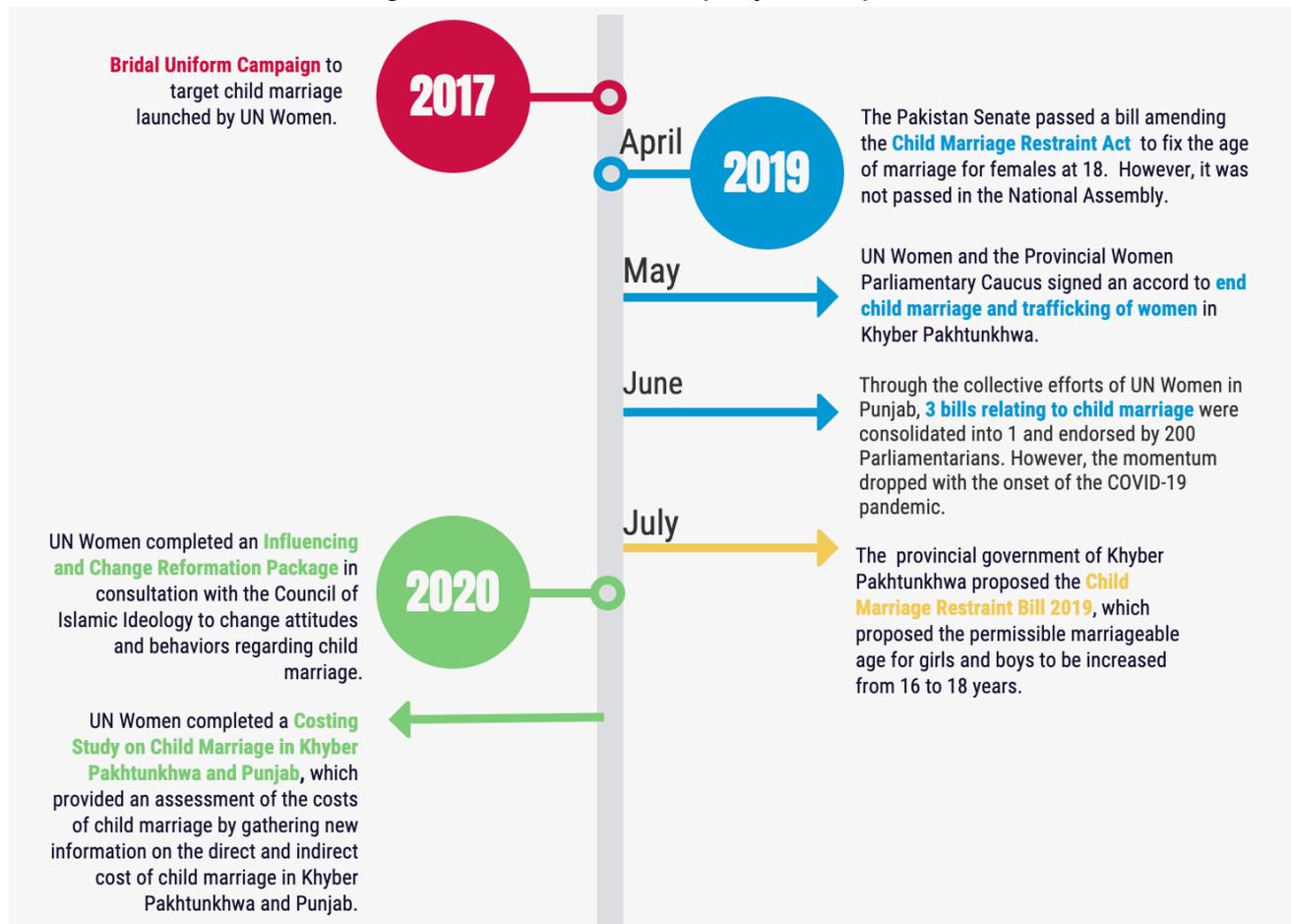
²³ Though we cannot directly attribute this to the campaign efforts and programme activities, given the massive audience it can be inferred that it has accelerated the policy-influencing process by creating awareness of and discussions on the issue of child marriage.

Social media campaigns on child marriage and dowry generated massive engagement around these issues thanks to the participation of key influencers and pro-bono partnerships with global advertising agencies with local presence (e.g. BBDO). The Country Office reported that the campaigns reached an astonishing number of impressions: 500 million for the 2017 Bridal Uniform campaign, 800,000 for the Stop Jahez Khori (Stop Dowry Mongering) campaign, and 8.2 million for the bridal fashion campaign NUMAISH—A Pledge against Dowry (See Annex 11 for more information on the campaigns). The Bridal Uniform campaign also received numerous international awards. Project-level advocacy and policy efforts included mobilizing key champions, parliamentarians, the Council for Islamic Ideology and civil society to advocate for the alignment of policy pertaining to child marriage with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and CEDAW; the production of research and evidence through a costing study on child marriage and gap analyses of legislation related to ending violence against women completed with funds from US-INL. The CPE mapped these activities and concurrent changes in policy as detailed in Figure 4.

While it is beneficial to stimulate discourse regarding the rights of women and girls, one lesson learned was that the Country Office should bear cultural sensitivities in mind and

carefully consider who it uses as the face of its campaigns to avoid backlash, which can distract from the key message of a campaign. In one case, there was some backlash against the engagement of a fashion designer who sells bridalwear at a very high cost – typically paid by the women’s family – which some saw as contrary to the message of ending dowry. The social media campaigns were also undertaken on a needs basis and in alignment with international/national observances (16 Days of Activism) rather than according to an established plan of action, which could otherwise have the potential to synergize with programmatic activities and legislative decision-making processes to produce more impactful results that influence positive social and behavioural change. Without an established communications strategy and accompanying monitoring and evaluation plan, the intended audience, key objectives, activities to be undertaken and approach to partnerships remain largely ad hoc and the impact of efforts is unknown. The Country Office noted that in late 2020 it established a new Communications and Partnership Unit with three personnel and shared with the CPE+A team a draft communications strategy and annual communications plan that are yet to be finalized and adopted but a good step in the right direction.

FIGURE 4: Timeline of child marriage activities undertaken and policy-level implications



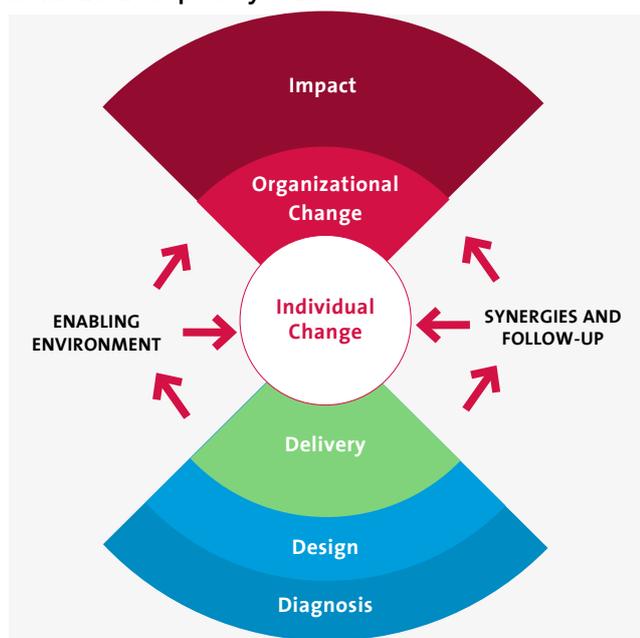
Source: Timeline developed by IES team based on a review of UN Women Results Management System reports and donor reports

FINDING 7

The Country Office has enhanced awareness, knowledge and skills of stakeholders on gender equality and women's empowerment and in some cases contributed towards sustainable change through empowerment and supporting the establishment of data systems, strategies and frameworks. However, lack of a clear partner and capacity-building strategy may have limited the full effectiveness and sustainability of efforts.

Capacity-building (at both individual and institutional levels) is an essential part of UN Women's efforts across the globe and a key element of the Pakistan Country Office Strategic Note 2018–2022. Its theory of change relies on the assumption that developing the capacity of the Government and community stakeholders, including service providers, is needed to achieve transformational change in the empowerment of women and girls and ensure that they can lead a life free from violence and harassment. Furthermore, men and boys should be made aware of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Strategic Note also focuses on building the capacities of women to enable them to participate in the economy, including as entrepreneurs, and access social protection and financial services for improved and sustainable livelihoods. The CPE evaluated the capacity-building efforts of the Country Office by adapting an existing framework²⁴ (see Figure 5) to assess the extent to which capacity-building is based on an appropriate diagnosis, design and delivery process; creates an enabling environment for beneficiaries to apply knowledge and skills; facilitates synergies with other similar activities; and includes follow-up support.

FIGURE 5: Capacity-building and institution-building framework adapted by CPE



²⁴ The framework was based on a combination of: 1) UN Women's evaluation framework used for the Regional Evaluation on UN Women's Capacity Development Initiatives in East and Southern Africa, focusing on criteria of diagnosis of the problem to be addressed with the training, design and delivery of the training intervention and follow-up to support application; 2) Capacity Development Evaluation Framework of FAO, observing the design and implementation of the intervention and changes at individual and organizational level and the extent to which an enabling environment was created for application and sustainability of results; 3) Kirkpatrick's model exploring a participant's reaction to training, learning of knowledge and skills, the ability to apply them and cause impact; and 4) COM-B model emphasizing that behavioural change requires developing capabilities and existing opportunities and motivators.

²⁵ Source: Country Office project and annual reports, external evaluations.

Individual capacity-building

The Country Office has reached many individuals through its training efforts, which have been rated highly by participants and contributed to increased awareness about gender equality and women's empowerment (see Annex 13.1). Nevertheless, based on the CPE case study findings, an overall approach to capacity-building is lacking a strategic long-term vision, follow-up support, feedback loops and attention to supporting an enabling environment to achieve lasting and impactful changes for individuals and institutions. Partnerships could be further leveraged to scale up reach and facilitate sustainability.

Training activities delivered by the Country Office and its implementing partners during the period 2018–2021 across all initiatives were compiled by the CPE team based on the project and annual reports. The Country Office reached approximately 14,955 persons, although disaggregation of data by sex, disability status and other characteristics was not consistently provided in reports (see Annex 13.1 for more information).²⁵ Thousands of government stakeholders, service providers and judiciary members were trained on gender equality and women's empowerment to raise their awareness and sensitivity and to support them in policy implementation and the provision of services and processes aimed at the protection of women's rights. The Country Office also trained close to 11,000 women home-based workers, including women with disabilities and members of the transgender community (see Annex 13.1), focusing on economic empowerment, increasing their income and advancing their livelihoods, improving their position in decision-making in the private sphere and advocating for their rights in the public sphere.

In most cases, implementing partners were contracted for capacity development actions. There is evidence that the Country Office and its partners invested efforts to systematically introduce several key aspects of capacity-building and training management, such as needs assessments, delivery of quality training and immediate post-training learning measurement.

However, monitoring and reporting remained largely at the activity level or immediately post-training, leaving little room to understand and track the long-term effects of capacity-building efforts.

There was also a lack of follow-up support from the Country Office and its partners, combined with a weak enabling environment for trainees to apply knowledge and skills after the project or training was complete, as identified by stakeholders consulted. External evaluations conducted in 2020–2021 also confirmed these findings. For example, the evaluation of the project for home-based workers concluded: “The project did not invest sufficiently in building capacity of women [home-based workers] in business planning skills, understanding marketing dynamics and forces, preparation of business plans, and

linkages with the value chain actors to graduate from being a piece-rate worker to become an own account worker and to set up micro and/or small enterprises.”²⁶ In addition, the evaluation of the project on ending violence against women noted that without a trainer-of-trainer approach and assured adoption of the curriculum by institutions, the training efforts had limited sustainability.²⁷

The Country Office did not ensure enough space for communication and synergies between different groups trained (e.g. police officials and lawyers or home-based workers and the private sector), and in most of the projects assessed there was a lack of vertical synergy with other components of the project, and horizontal synergy with other Country Office projects or thematic areas.

BOX 4. SUMMARY OF CPE CASE STUDY ON CAPACITY-BUILDING EFFORTS



DIAGNOSIS

While the Country Office usually defined its capacity-building approach based on earlier cooperation with target groups and beneficiaries, research and partners’ demands, targeted needs assessments with training beneficiaries were introduced in several (but not all) interventions.



DESIGN

Design of capacity-building mostly responded to needs. However, there were missed opportunities to integrate baseline measurements, longer term follow-up, immediate on-the-job support, and synergy with other project components into the overall design. While most training had balanced theoretical, conceptual and practical aspects, information on how participants were selected was lacking.



DELIVERY

Generally, delivery of training by the Country Office and its partners provided an adequate learning environment and corresponded to what was envisaged in the training design. Implementing partners reported a high level of participant satisfaction (95 per cent), and trainers in most cases were perceived as knowledgeable. While most training was implemented as planned, the Country Office/partners reported challenges, such as in delivery (delays in the development of manuals and the start of training, trivialization of the issues presented or lack of an interactive approach).



SYNERGIES AND FOLLOW-UP

Overall, synergies and follow-up were lacking in the design and implementation of capacity-building efforts. Some examples of missed opportunities include joint training sessions and periodic exchanges between police, judges and prosecutors, a training-of-trainer approach, and monitoring and analysis of how skills were applied.



ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

While partners and beneficiaries recognized the normative support (policy frameworks, strategies, laws, etc.) and research and knowledge generation produced by the Country Office, key informants to the CPE asked for more technical, hands-on and financial support for implementation and advocacy to enhance the enabling environment within institutions for practicing knowledge and skills from training.

continued on following page >>

26 UN Women Pakistan, Evaluation of Economic Empowerment of Women Home-Based Workers and Excluded Groups in Pakistan, 2021.

27 UN Women Pakistan, End Term Evaluation: Prevention and protection of women from violence through access to justice, services and safe spaces in Pakistan 2016-2020, July 2021.

INDIVIDUAL CHANGE



The majority of changes registered happened at the individual level and as an immediate effect of the support provided. The Country Office introduced pre- and post-testing in most of its capacity-building efforts to measure learning. Training recipients reported awareness-raising and advancement of knowledge and skills. Some of the public officials interviewed for this CPE mentioned that the training was beneficial in their work on policy planning, but that further support is required to become fully independent. Support to women home-based workers and women with disabilities resulted in deeper attitudinal change involving improved self-confidence, a sense of agency and power and understanding of their own rights.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE



The Country Office capacity-building support seems to be effective in identifying and building champions in the institutions. However, there is limited evidence that it results in wider organizational transformation. Initial results are seen through cooperation with the National Police Academy on ending violence against women, and there are joint efforts with UN Women to integrate into formal police education training on enhancing the attitude of police towards survivors of violence against women.

IMPACT



In the absence of long-term follow-up on the beneficiaries of capacity-building programmes and systematic capturing of results, information about impacts is not available. While increased awareness and interest seems to have been achieved, there was limited evidence found to directly link impact with capacity-building efforts. An external project evaluation of women's economic empowerment programmes (home-based workers and women with disabilities) reported limited improvement in participants' income, yet identified shifts in family decision-making, and ability to invest income for the benefit of their families.

Source: IES-led CPE case study summary.

Institution-building

The CPE also looked at how the Country Office supported the embedding of gender-responsive capacities as a means to sustain focus on the priorities and needs of women and girls and the most vulnerable populations. The CPE observed several factors that indicate sustainable institution-building, such as budget allocation, establishment of mechanisms to facilitate action (e.g. a unit, reporting mechanism/requirement), adoption of curricula and requirement to take coursework (e.g. by the police academy). The CPE identified examples of where the Country Office was making progress on these aspects and found four primary strategies that were employed and have high potential for ensuring sustainable institution-building (see Table 5). However, the Country Office should also be aware of the risks/challenges to ensuring sustainability. The key strategies employed were: 1) providing technical support to the establishment of frameworks and strategies; 2) embedding technical expertise within partner institutions; 3) generating and using research and evidence to advocate for institutionalization; and 4) establishing mechanisms to facilitate data collection and reporting on gender equality and women's empowerment. The CPE found more evidence of action and success with government partners than with civil society. There are examples of where the Country Office was able to influence the allocation of budget and the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate

sustainability. However, follow-up and costing were not always achieved, which limited the potential for sustainability (see Table 5).

The network analysis (see Annex 14 for an overview) completed for the CPE identified that the Country Office engaged with several of the same government partners. However, interviews and a desk review confirmed limited coordination between Country Office projects, even within the same thematic area. There were nine memoranda of understanding to formalize partnerships with government entities, which provided a solid foundation from which to strengthen partnerships. Nevertheless, it was unclear how these were managed (e.g. focal point, key performance indicators, reviews, etc.). There is an opportunity to utilize the memoranda of understanding to follow up and jointly review progress. It is important to ensure a coordinated approach across thematic areas to reduce the burden on partners but also to capitalize on synergies and reach and to reduce costs. For example, both of the Country Office thematic area teams worked with the Ministry of Human Rights, the national and provincial commissions on the status of women and parliamentarians. There is also scope for wider collaboration with the private sector so as to leverage collective strengths, which can enable peer-to-peer learning by sharing best practices and innovative approaches that are being implemented with a view to advance gender equality.

TABLE 5: Examples of Country Office efforts to build gender-responsive governmental institutions

Example of Country Office strategy	 Good practice/potential	 Challenges/risks
Technical support to the establishment of frameworks and strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Country Office supported the establishment of strategic plans for the national and provincial commissions on the status of women. The Country Office supported the Government of Sindh to adopt the Sindh Home-Based Workers Act 2018 and the endorsement of its Rules of Business in 2020, and the review and reform of the Sindh Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act 2018 and the drafting of its Rules of Business. Sindh also contributed approximately US\$ 118,000 for a home-based workers fund. The Country Office supported gender-responsive planning and budgeting guidelines to embed gender indicators into the planning and budgeting processes. The guidelines were endorsed by the Labour and Human Resource Department, the Government of Punjab and Labour Department and the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. 	<p>There is a risk that the framework or strategy remains on paper if it is not costed and accompanied by an action plan that includes roles and responsibilities and a monitoring framework. An external evaluation report noted, “In the absence of an implementation plan and resources, the Strategic Plan developed for the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women was seen to have limited effectiveness.” The report recommends that “similar initiatives in the future are accompanied with actionable work plans that clearly delineate responsibilities and financial resources.” *</p> <p>* UN Women, End Term Evaluation: Prevention and protection of women from violence through access to justice, services and safe spaces in Pakistan 2016–2020, July 2021.</p>
Embedding consultants within government entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A technical consultant was placed at the Social Welfare, Special Education and Women Empowerment Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The Country Office reported that the consultant provided inroads to building a stronger partnership and advocated for a US\$3.3 million annual development scheme of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that was approved. 	<p>There is a risk that the consultant leaves and the Government entity does not fund a similar position, or a risk that the consultant was doing all of the work without coaching or collaborating with the Government, thereby reducing the transfer of expertise.</p>
Generation and utilization of research and evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Country Office supported the Women’s Development Department, Government of Sindh, in conducting an audit of women’s safety in public places. The Country Office reported that based on a capacity assessment supported by the Country Office, in 2019 the Government of Punjab allocated budget to renovate a Shelter Home to enable it to be a one-stop violence against women centre. 	<p>There is a risk that the Government does not adopt the safety audit or capacity assessment approach or maintain adequate capacity to carry it out, thereby reducing the possibility to ensure continuous monitoring of the necessary capacity/situation.</p>
Establishment of mechanisms to facilitate data collection and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Country Office supported the establishment of the National Gender Data Portal, which was developed in collaboration with the National Commission on the Status of Women to fill data gaps at a national level, from parts of the country where systematic approaches for collecting data related to women and girls are weak. The Country Office aimed to support the Government of Sindh to establish a Management Information System to collect information on the economic and trade profiles of women home-based workers for better targeting of services and linking these women with government departments, industry and businesses. 	<p>It is necessary to have a plan for capacitating data collectors, data analysts and data users. It is also important to ensure continuous funding for data collection/analysis efforts. It is unclear whether the Country Office has embedded the follow-up support in its plan.</p> <p>Costed plans and technical expertise to see through the initiative; such as necessary staff and equipment. **</p> <p>** UN Women Pakistan, Evaluation of Economic Empowerment of Women Home-Based Workers and Excluded Groups in Pakistan, 2021.</p>

Source: : IES team analysis based on UN Women Results Management System reports and donor reports.

With respect to civil society, progress was not as notable as with the Government. Most stakeholders referred to the vibrant civil society in Pakistan despite the constraints in civic organizing, yet noted that the Country Office had not effectively engaged civil society (more information is provided in Finding 10). One example of the challenges in ensuring the sustainability of efforts with civil society is the experience of the home-based workers project. UNIFEM (UN Women's predecessor in the country) supported the establishment of HomeNet, an organization focused on raising awareness of the rights of home-based workers (See Box. 6). However, stakeholders consulted noted that the organization has not been successful in raising significant alternative resources, creating a dependency on UN Women. UN Women has worked in collaboration with HomeNet since its establishment, hiring HomeNet as an implementing partner to support capacity-building efforts targeting home-based workers. On the one hand, the establishment of the organization is evidence of institution-building. However, the risk is that if the Country Office were to pull funds, this organization may not be able to sustain its efforts or may need to scale back efforts.

Furthermore, a personnel survey of the Country Office led by the CPE team revealed that the capacity-building efforts of the Country Office targeting civil society require attention, with the highest number of respondents (22 per cent) rating efforts with CSOs as "not effective". As Finding 10 notes, efforts with other CSOs were not at the institution-building level. There is room for UN Women to enhance its overall engagement with civil society.

BOX 6. HomeNet PAKISTAN



HomeNet Pakistan was set up in 2005.

It is a network of 360 organizations with over 50,000 women members across Pakistan. HomeNet Pakistan was formed to raise awareness about the economic, social, domestic and working conditions of women home-based workers, who comprise 74 per cent of the informal workforce that contributes to the country's economic activities.

Source: <https://homenetpakistan.org/>

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Has the portfolio been designed and implemented according to the principles of human rights, leaving no one behind, including disability perspectives, social and environmental safeguards and development effectiveness (ensuring national ownership and sustainability of programming efforts)?

FINDING 9

The Country Office has made concerted efforts to engage the most marginalized women, including women with disabilities, rural women from the Newly Merged Districts and transgender persons. Advocacy for their rights has been the main successful strategy. However, programmatic efforts to ensure sustainable change through broader social norm change must be embedded in the overarching programme, and long-term project time frames should be negotiated.

Effort at various levels – individual, systemic, formal and informal – is required to ensure long-lasting positive changes for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Annex 10 provides a snapshot of the operational and normative efforts of the Country Office during the Strategic Note period, following the Gender@Work framework, an analytical tool used by the CPE team to map where the programming activities of the Country Office were concentrated.

A large part of Country Office work is focused on the normative mandate of UN Women (the "formal rules and policies quadrant"), especially against the backdrop of its pledge to leave no one behind. This includes, but is not limited to, drafting the implementation frameworks of

gender equality and women's empowerment policies in all four provinces, drafting and implementation of the policy on the Home-Based Workers Act in Punjab and Sindh and support for the Transgender Rights Protection Policy and the Rules of Business for implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act in Balochistan.

The CPE team found evidence of efforts aimed at the "individual consciousness and capabilities" and "access to resources" levels. Its survey of Country Office personnel reveals that the majority of respondents (61 per cent or 11 out of 18 respondents) felt that Country Office work was aligned to a great extent with the most pressing needs of women and girls in Pakistan.

Training efforts have been undertaken to sensitize governmental officials, police and individuals from the judicial/legal sector to gender issues. Valuable work has been done to encourage economic participation of women with disabilities and transgender persons and to imbibe in women the confidence to monetize their businesses, enabling them to lead financially independent lives. For example, beneficiaries of the Economic Empowerment of Women Home-Based Workers and Excluded Groups in Pakistan programme expressed that in addition to gaining a voice and awareness of their rights, they also saw an increase in their capabilities, skills and therefore their self-confidence and courage. Furthermore, the external evaluation of the project²⁸ found that many women were investing a major part of their income in providing good-quality higher education to their children, building foundations for a better future for their children, a positive spillover effect of the intervention. The Country Office reported a significant increase in the income of some beneficiaries. However, although some beneficiaries confirmed such an increase, neither the external evaluation nor the CPE team were able to confirm this. The Country Office should be commended for its work to target women with disabilities and transgender persons in its programmes, which was evident from several proposals. One programme, Moving from Charity Model to Rights-Based Work, specifically targeted only women with disabilities. The Country Office reported reaching more than 1,200 women with disabilities across the country through this effort. Under the programme, women with disabilities participated in vocational training. However, there is limited information about the results of these efforts. Similarly, the home-based workers programme expanded its scope by diversifying the target group and including not only women with disabilities but also transgender persons. While the programme surpassed its target of reaching 200 transgender persons, it lacked meaningful engagement and could not fully integrate these individuals in project activities.²⁹ The Country Office reported that transgender persons were helped to create online shops and connected with local and international markets to sell their products. However, the external evaluation concluded that the project implementing partner did not undertake an analysis of the specific context or obtain specialized knowledge and understanding of the needs and challenges faced by the transgender community. Country Office could address the deep-rooted stigma and social exclusion faced by these marginalized groups in a more appropriate manner by partnering with organizations that have a history working with transgender persons.

Without specific indicators in the Strategic Note that reflect and track the number of beneficiaries reached (as in the case of women with disabilities and transgender persons) through Country Office interventions in line with project proposals, capturing results that fully measure the impact of activities contributing to the principle of leaving no one behind remains limited.

The Country Office was able to target “informal norms and exclusionary practices” through limited community-based activities to gain the support of men on women’s economic empowerment and engaging religious scholars in developing a message to generate awareness and support to end child marriage on a broader societal level. Public awareness and advocacy activities through events such as 16 Days of Activism and social media campaigns such as #StopJahezKhoris (#StopDowryMongering) and the Wonder Women of Pakistan documentary series have grabbed public attention, wherein an attempt has been made to tackle highly ingrained gender stereotypes (see Annex 11 for more information on the campaigns). However, the performance of the Country Office in this area remains relatively weak, given that long-term and holistic (involving all societal stakeholders) engagement, which is fundamental to enabling transformative changes at the broader level, is limited. Since the Country Office does not have a strategy in place to measure social norm change, there is a lack of good evidence on large-scale societal change that it may have impacted. (See Annex 10 on Gender@work for more information.)

As identified in previous findings, the programmatic efforts lacked a long-term vision. Certain programme beneficiaries, government stakeholders, CSOs and implementing partners consulted by the CPE team expressed that the efforts of the Country Office were relevant but lacked long-term follow-up, such as providing ongoing support to training participants and monitoring the application of knowledge and skills and the implementation of policies. Even for long-term projects such as the home-based workers programme, the cohort of beneficiaries was not engaged or tracked over the long term, and some beneficiaries noted that they did not receive adequate support after the training. New cohorts were engaged, which increased the total number reached, but there was no indication of the overall impact on home-based workers. Similarly, none of the participants in justice-sector training who were contacted for this CPE were aware of any follow-up support by UN Women, nor could they report any changes in their working environment that would facilitate the application of knowledge (as discussed under Finding 7).

²⁸ UN Women Pakistan, Evaluation of Economic Empowerment of Women Home-Based Workers and Excluded Groups in Pakistan, 2021.

²⁹ The external project evaluation noted that none of the transgender persons reached were willing to attend trade or vocational skills training, as most of them were assumed to be engaged in their traditional livelihood activities. In certain districts, despite several attempts made by the two partners, persons from the transgender community did not accept to become part of the project.

FINDING 10

In the context of shrinking space for civil society organizations in Pakistan, and with respect to UN Women's global dedication to the women's movement, Country Office efforts in this area were lacking a strategic approach for convening, mobilizing and capacitating civil society.

The UN Women Strategic Plan (2018–2021)³⁰ recognizes the role that CSOs, in particular women's organizations, play in promoting women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women's long-standing relationship with the women's movement gives it the opportunity to bring its voices, capacities and contributions in support of gender equality and women's empowerment, notably to those most likely to be left behind. The USAID CSO Sustainability Index for 2018 provided an overall CSO sustainability score of 4.2 to Pakistan on a 7 point scale, with the legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability and advocacy dimension all recording slight deteriorations.³¹ In the context of shrinking space for CSOs in Pakistan, UN Women has a pivotal role to play in capacitating these organizations through coordinating platforms and institutional strengthening of CSOs working on gender equality and women's empowerment. This engagement should involve CSOs not only at the national and provincial levels, but also at the grass-roots level.

CSAG and the Ending Violence Against Women/Girls Alliance (EVAWG Alliance) were two such platforms envisaged by the Country Office to enhance their reach to CSOs and women's rights activists. The CSAG focus group discussion participants³² identified that although CSAG was poised as a strong platform for convening and voicing CSO concerns and priorities, it lacked a clear objective and strategy for engagement and did not meet regularly. As such, it lost the initial vigour and momentum with which it was envisioned. While the group was representative, not much was done to leverage members' expertise and knowledge of grass-roots concerns. A review of its annual reports (2018–2020) by the evaluation team indicated that only one CSAG meeting was held (in 2018). Furthermore, no women's organizations or CSOs have been supported by the Country Office since 2018, as reported against OEEF Output Indicator 2A and Outcome Indicator 1.2E.³³ The Country Office reported that it worked closely with EVAWG Alliances in all 4 provinces and supported them to conduct a strategic planning exercise. One key challenge Country

Office personnel identified was the need to manage relationships with civil society carefully given the very diverse perspectives, both within the women's movement and between the movement and other key partners of UN Women, which had caused some tension with partners in the past. The credibility of UN Women is inextricably linked to its relationship with the women's movement. Thus, a clear strategy that recognizes diverse perspectives and approaches to issues continues to emerge and evolve within movements, may enhance the understanding of UN Women partners with respect to its approach to engaging with the women's movement in Pakistan.

CSOs are key players in creating conditions for the realization of the rights of women and girls through their work on the front lines. Several international organizations in Pakistan have seized the opportunity to complement their development assistance by cultivating civil society partnerships. To strengthen its cooperation with CSOs, the Asian Development Bank's NGO and Civil Society Center periodically prepares reports on the context for CSO activities, which contributes to awareness of the important role that CSOs play in promoting development across the Asia-Pacific region. The reports are usually prepared by NGOs or with substantial input from NGOs.³⁴ Similarly, with the aim of building CSO capacity to mobilize and engage youth, enhance involvement in decision-making and improve access to economic opportunities for marginalized groups in the face of socioeconomic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Union is investing in Pakistan's civil society by co-financing three projects, for a total amount of €7.23 million.³⁵ Stakeholders consulted across stakeholder types see this as UN Women's global niche, yet highlight the need for the Country Office in Pakistan to step up its collaborative efforts with CSOs. In 2021, the Country Office planned to strengthen its partnership with inter-agency and civil society groups through the Inter-Agency Gender and Development Group, CSAG and the EVAWG Alliance to ensure effective collaboration and advance gender equality.³⁶

30 United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Strategic Plan 2018–2021, accessible at: <https://undocs.org/en/UNW/2017/6/Rev.1>.

31 USAID's CSO Sustainability Index measures the strength and overall viability of civil society sectors. The overall rating is based on the scores attained for legal environment, organizational capacity, financial viability, advocacy, service provision, sectoral infrastructure and public image. The latest CSO Sustainability Index report is available for the year 2018 and can be accessed at: <https://storage.googleapis.com/cso-si-dashboard.appspot.com/Reports/CSOSI-Pakistan-2018.pdf>.

32 The CPE team held a focus group discussion with five former CSAG members (four women, one man).

33 As reported against Output Indicator 2A ("How many initiatives led by your CSAG members and other UN Women-supported civil society mechanisms supported the achievements of UN Women results?") and Outcome Indicator 1.2E "How many women's organizations did your office support to strengthen their capacity to advocate for gender-responsive budgeting?"

34 Asian Development Bank, Overview of Civil Society Organizations, Pakistan, <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/28971/csb-pak.pdf>.

35 European Union, European Union to Support Pakistani Civil Society with €7.23M to mitigate impact of COVID-19, 16 March 2021, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/pakistan/95119/european-union-support-pakistani-civil-society-%E2%82%AC723m-mitigate-impact-covid-19_en.

36 Ibid.

EFFICIENCY, GOVERNANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Does UN Women Pakistan have appropriate governance, capacity and capability to ensure good use of resources (personnel, funding and assets) to deliver results?

FINDING 11

The Country Office has gone through a period of limited cross-team collaboration and reported tensions among personnel. While moving in the right direction, there is room to strengthen governance with a view to enhancing collaboration across teams (programme, operations, Sub-Offices) and capacity-building of personnel.

The Country Office had 59 personnel as of 22 July 2021, consisting of 14 staff members with Fixed-Term Appointments, 16 employees on Service Contracts, 26 consultants on Special Service Agreements and 3 UN Volunteers. The overall office number of personnel fits the current size of portfolio, ranking 14th within UN Women on a global basis in terms of number of personnel as of July 2021, yet with a high reliance on the Special Service Agreements. The audit raises important points regarding the need for strengthening human resources practices and streamlining the use of personnel.

Lack of an owned and coherent vision that integrates thematic areas and projects has resulted in thematic areas being vertically managed with limited cross-team collaboration. There are also challenges related to unclear internal reporting lines (particularly with Sub-Offices) and maintaining institutional knowledge. The Country Office has relied significantly on consultants to compensate for staffing shortages, mainly due to lack of funding for long-term positions. Some of the external stakeholders consulted raised the issue of a lack of continuity in personnel, noting that employees stay for only a short time. The Country Office has noted that the rationale for the high number of consultants was to engage specific thematic expertise.

The CPE team led a personnel survey of full-time personnel, with a 72 per cent response rate (see Annex 9). The survey flagged some persistent challenges:

1. While most respondents (78 per cent or 14 out of 18 respondents) “strongly agreed” that internal communication is sufficient to keep them informed and assist them in performing their role, as many as 50 per cent (9 out of 18 respondents) only “somewhat agreed” that programmatic and operational teams and other functions work well to support each other in achieving the goals and objectives of the Country Office. Furthermore, 44 per cent (8 out of 18 respondents) only “somewhat agreed” that they were informed of key developments.
2. Similarly, while 67 per cent (12 out of 18 respondents) “strongly agreed” that they were empowered by their team and 61 per cent (11 out of 18 respondents) “strongly agreed” that the Country Office provided a supportive, safe and inclusive work environment, as many as 44 per cent (8 out of 18 respondents) only “somewhat agreed” with the statement that all personnel, regardless of contractual type, are treated with dignity and respect.³⁷ This mixed response must be seen against the backdrop of the fact that the current make-up of personnel is diverse, 48 per cent of the personnel are individual consultants but were excluded from the results due to their low response.³⁸

A key recommendation expressed in the survey was to establish a formal internal channel of communication within the team to maximize productivity. More than half of the respondents (56 per cent or 10 out of 18 respondents) believe that they are “somewhat confident” in their respective thematic knowledge to fulfil their duties and can access regional and headquarters expertise when they do not possess the necessary knowledge. The remaining 44 per cent (8 out of 18 respondents) are confident that they possess relevant knowledge and skills to fulfil their duties. Procurement, finance and articulation of results were areas in which personnel expressed they need the most support (see Annex 9). The narrative of the Strategic Note (2018–2022) acknowledged that there have been challenges in timely planning, procurement and a uniform understanding of standard operating procedures. Consequently, a key indicator of the OEEF (Output Cluster 4)³⁹ was dedicated to ensuring that a system was in place for effective and efficient procurement of goods and services in accordance with the approved procurement plan. The internal audit raised the need for the Country Office to continue investing time in developing a more streamlined and planned procurement process, as the current system is too piecemeal and time intensive, which could divert attention from more strategic use of time.

37 Individual consultants on Special Service Agreements were not part of the personnel survey led by the CPE team.

38 As per the updated staff list provided by the Country Office.

39 Annual Work Plan, 2021.

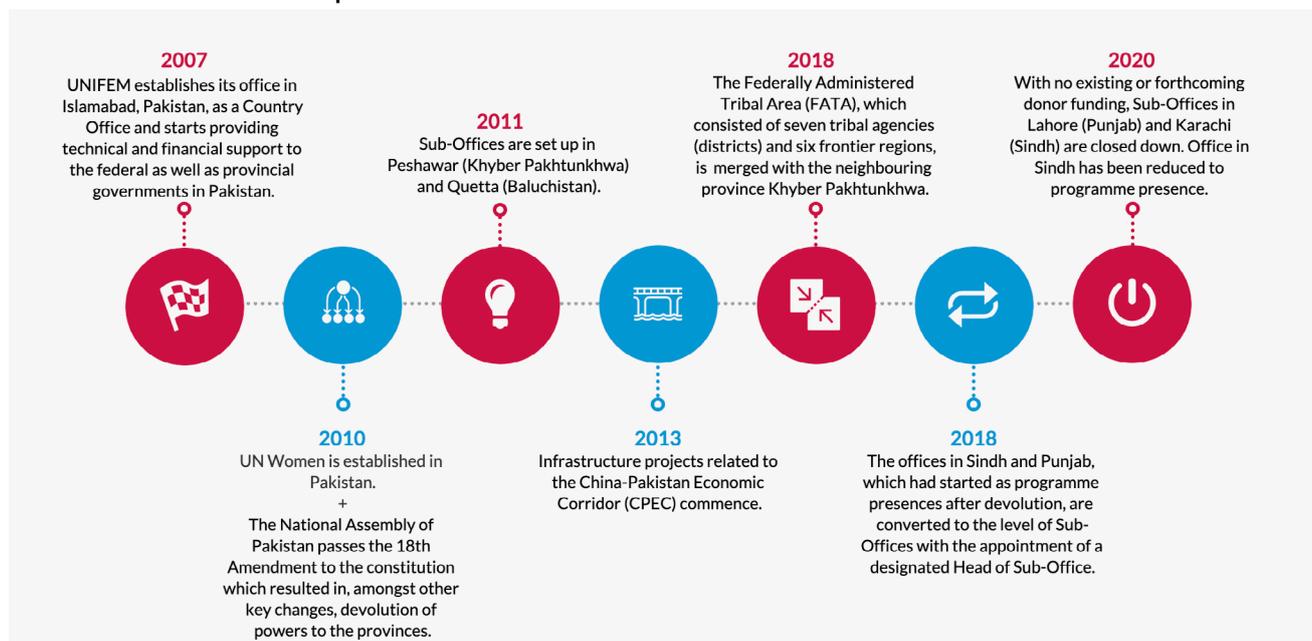
Country Office personnel consulted by the CPE team noted that personnel were too engaged in implementation and administrative work, leading to burnout and limiting the resources that could have been invested in strategic visioning. While 28 per cent (5 out of 18 respondents) expressed that they felt “very overloaded” with work, half of the respondents (50 per cent or 9 out of 18 respondents) felt “sometimes overloaded” (see Annex 9). Some of the reasons cited for this demanding workload included having a small team performing a multiplicity of tasks and extensive quality assurance procedures.

The above issues were recognized by Country Office personnel and external partners, and the Country Office reported taking steps to improve the situation through a series of efforts in 2019, a Regional Office monitoring mission in 2019 focused on key risks and processes and to support teambuilding, a strategic visioning process initiated in late 2020, personnel retreats to improve internal coordination, and more recently weekly operations cafés organized by the Operations Team to help clarify roles and responsibilities between Operations and Programme teams.

Sub-Office architecture

The CPE looked in-depth at the Sub-Office architecture to assess the relevance and organizational efficiency of its operations (see Annex 13.2). It identified a strong rationale for the existence of Sub-Offices and their contribution to overall performance, as well as challenges in resource mobilization and governance. During the Strategic Note period, the Country Office had four Sub-Offices (Peshawar (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Quetta (Balochistan), Karachi (Sindh) and Lahore (Punjab)) that had been established based on the rationale⁴⁰ of enhancing collaboration with provincial governments and local stakeholders given the devolution of the government entities focused on gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as the rationale that UN Women should be operational in hard-to-reach communities, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Newly Merged Districts and Baluchistan. These are high-priority areas in terms of gender inequality, socioeconomic needs and donor and development partner interest (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6: Timeline of development of the Sub-Office architecture



Source: Developed by the IES team based on review of a Sub-Office business case.

Interviews conducted with UN Women personnel revealed that Sub-Offices facilitated significant work on gender equality and women’s empowerment, carrying out the triple mandate of UN Women at the provincial level and supporting project implementation in the field. In addition to being responsible for managing and implementing multiple programmes at the provincial level, Heads of Sub-Offices also act as representatives of UN Women by liaising and partnering with an array of government agencies and development partners, e.g. the provincial Women’s Parliamentary Caucuses, Ombudspersons for Protection Against Harassment at the Workplace,

the provincial commissions on the status of women, the Women’s Development Department, and United Nations and other development actors providing capacity-building and assistance in fulfilment of national and global commitments on gender equality and women’s empowerment. Other United Nations entities interviewed for this evaluation confirmed the general relevance of and need for Sub-Offices, noting that UN Women Sub-Offices have strengthened or are currently strengthening their presence in the field (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA).

Governance arrangements in the Sub-Offices are ambiguous, and there is a lack of clarity on the responsibilities of personnel, as identified by the audit and CPE team interviews with personnel. For example, although the Heads of Sub-Offices reported to the Country Office, in the past they were not consistently involved in the planning and design of programmes they were expected to implement in the field.

Furthermore, some field-based positions reported to the project manager based in Islamabad rather than the Head of Sub-Office, which contributed to a lack of coordination and team-building. UN Women personnel noted that lack of an administrative associate based in the sub-office also posed some operational challenges.

FINDING 12

Overall results-based management requires attention. Programmes were not designed in ways to capture outcome-level change, and limited attention to the monitoring and evaluation function had impacted the ability of the Country Office to report confidently on results and limited its overall capability to ensure good use of resources to deliver results.

The evaluability assessment of the Strategic Note and review of project document results frameworks revealed weak results-based management. Half of the Strategic Note outcomes and most of their indicators were assessed as weak and not describing outcome-level changes, but rather describing output- or activity-level changes or being too general and difficult to measure. Most outputs and their indicators were assessed as weak, nonspecific and with limited qualitative aspect. Consequently, it is challenging to have the same understanding both internally and externally (with implementing partners, the Government, United Nations system partners, etc.) about the expected changes, and there is a risk that subsequent transformational change for institutions or

end beneficiaries will not be adequately planned for or captured and reported. UN Women personnel noted that the Regional Office provided limited programme design and results based management support to the Country Office. This was primarily because, as has been raised in the 2019 audit of the Regional Office⁴¹ and in the 2021 evaluation of the Regional Office contributions to Women, Peace and Security⁴², the regional thematic leads reliance on non-core funds has diverted their attention away from providing strategic support to countries other than those that are directly involved in regional programmes. The Country Office was not engaged in any regional programmes during the Strategic Note period.

TABLE 6: Results of evaluability assessment of the Strategic Note Development Results Framework

	Weak	Adequate	Strong	
Outcomes	50% (5)	50% (5)	0%	
Outcome indicators	60% (6)	30% (3)	0%	
Outputs	69% (9)	21% (2+1 semi)	0%	
Output indicators	74% (20)	22% (6)	4% (1 semi)	

Source: Prepared by IES based on the CPE+A evaluability assessment.

The Country Office also takes a project, rather than programme-design, approach, and sometimes projects or even actions within the same project lacked exchange (e.g. the home-based workers and women with disabilities economic empowerment projects or capacity-building of police, legal professionals and the judiciary). Some implementing partners were engaged for specific tasks and rarely for follow-up, so the reports remain

activity-based, beneficiaries were not tracked over time and outcome-level information is missing (as also noted in external evaluations of the projects on women's economic empowerment and access to justice). Furthermore, the Country Office consistently reported the same activities under multiple areas of the annual report and even across years.

41 UN Women Internal Audit Service, Regional Audit: Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 2019 (IEAS/IAS/2019/010): <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20ous/accountability/audit-reports/2019/un-women-audit-report-2019-010-asia-pacific-ro-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5521>

42 UN Women Independent Evaluation Service, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific contributions to Women, Peace and Security, 2021; <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=11537>

The audit provides more detail on issues related to accountability to beneficiaries, noting that the Country Office did not have a solid process to ensure adequate management of its accountability to beneficiaries, which is tied to the need for enhanced results-based management at the project level. This included issues related to limited or lack of community needs assessments because it was not required or programme partners had to fast track project implementation due to the short-term nature of contracts, which meant that the programmes were not always well targeted to the needs of the individuals. Additionally, beneficiary selection criteria were either not included or not well defined in project documents and monitoring and post-implementation follow up with beneficiaries was not always in place.

The Country Office did not have personnel with Monitoring and Evaluation expertise or Unit or designated personnel during the period under review, but the recruitment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer was completed at the time of writing this report. Monitoring was undertaken by programme officers, the portfolio manager and/or a financial associate and was project-focused.

Field visits⁴³ to implementing partners were infrequent and focused mostly on administrative and financial reporting and progress updates and less on validating activities or discussing forward-looking programmatic perspectives (see Annex 12). The limited validation or third-party verification of efforts presents limitations to the confidence in reporting from the Country Office, e.g. CPE interviews with targeted beneficiaries identified that many could not recall the training or be reached.⁴⁴

On the positive side, the Country Office took some isolated steps to strengthen the results-based management approach. There are examples of research, evidence-generation and learning from earlier project phases (e.g. home-based workers), completion of some capacity needs assessments (e.g. gender-responsive budgeting, inclusion of women with disabilities, training on ending violence against women for judiciary, protection services and law enforcement) and gap analysis/gender auditing, and in 2021 the Country Office completed two external evaluations after a four year gap with no evaluations. The office has also recently engaged the Regional Office in providing a capacity-building workshop on results-based management.

FINDING 13

Lack of an overarching resource-mobilization plan poses a risk to the efficient operation of the Country Office, including its Sub-Offices. The rationale for maintaining Sub-Offices is strong, however the current management arrangements are not supporting efficient or sustainable operations, which places the credibility of UN Women at risk.

At the time of the CPE+A, the resource mobilization strategy was yet to be fully developed and finalized. The Country Office has experienced significant challenges caused by the discontinuation of funding from a key donor that resulted in the closure of some Sub-Offices and the downsizing of Country Office human resources. Although there was a Representative acting interim, there was a large gap in official appointment of leadership positions as a result of the slow government approval process for the next Country Representative, which may have compounded the challenges faced by the Country Office. The previous Country Representative left the position in August 2019 and the current Country Representative and Deputy Country Representative joined the Country Office physically in October 2020 and subsequently initiated a

strategic visioning process and engagement of prospective donors for resource mobilization, which was ongoing during the CPE.

One key challenge experienced by the Country Office was setting accurate targets for resource mobilization. Annual targets for the Development Results Framework in 2020 and 2021 were significantly reduced compared to 2018 and 2019, while actual resource mobilization was successful, which also reduced the funding gap. Resource requirements for Core Budget and Institutional Budget remained relatively constant over the period. The Country Office reported financial budget delivery rates in 2018 and 2019 of 100 per cent and 96 per cent respectively, while this figure decreased in 2020 to 89 per cent, which is understandable given the COVID-19 pandemic.

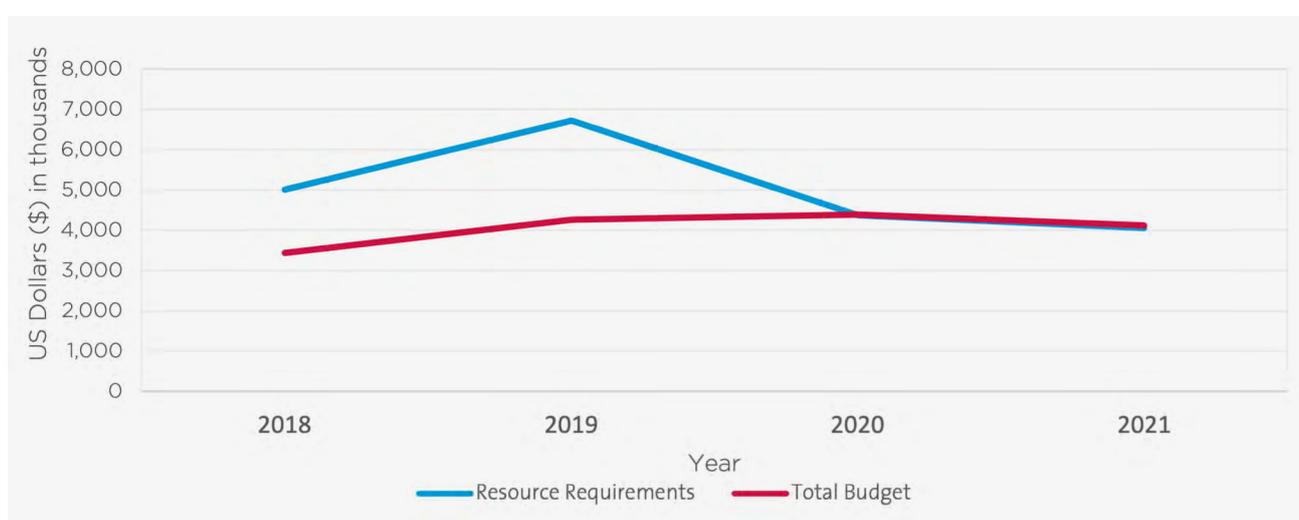
⁴³ The CPE team reviewed a sample of 12 mission reports and corresponding project donor and evaluation reports.

⁴⁴ For example, only 6 out of 22 police and judicial personnel (27 per cent) could verify their participation, although their name and phone number were on the participants list. For the computerized national identity card registration effort, the CPE team attempted to reach 60 beneficiaries, with only 13 agreeing to be interviewed. It should be noted that phone numbers change and most often the phone number is registered to a male member of the family, making it more difficult to reach the beneficiary.

TABLE 7. Resource requirements and total budget (US \$) 2018–2021

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Resource requirements (DRF)	4,307,899	5,742,044	3,524,930	3,223,564
Total budget (DRF)	2,719,348	3,485,925	3,584,464	3,283,268
Funding gap (DRF)	1,588,551	2,256,119	(59,534)	209,639
Resource requirements (OEEF)	696,572	971,937	841,287	832,385
Total budget (OEEF)	713,016	772,269	795,476	838,238
Funding gap (OEEF)	(16,444)	199,668	45,811	(116,665)

Source: Developed by the IAS team based on the UN Women Results Management System.

FIGURE 7: Funding gap (DRF)

Source: Developed by the IES team based on the UN Women Results Management System.

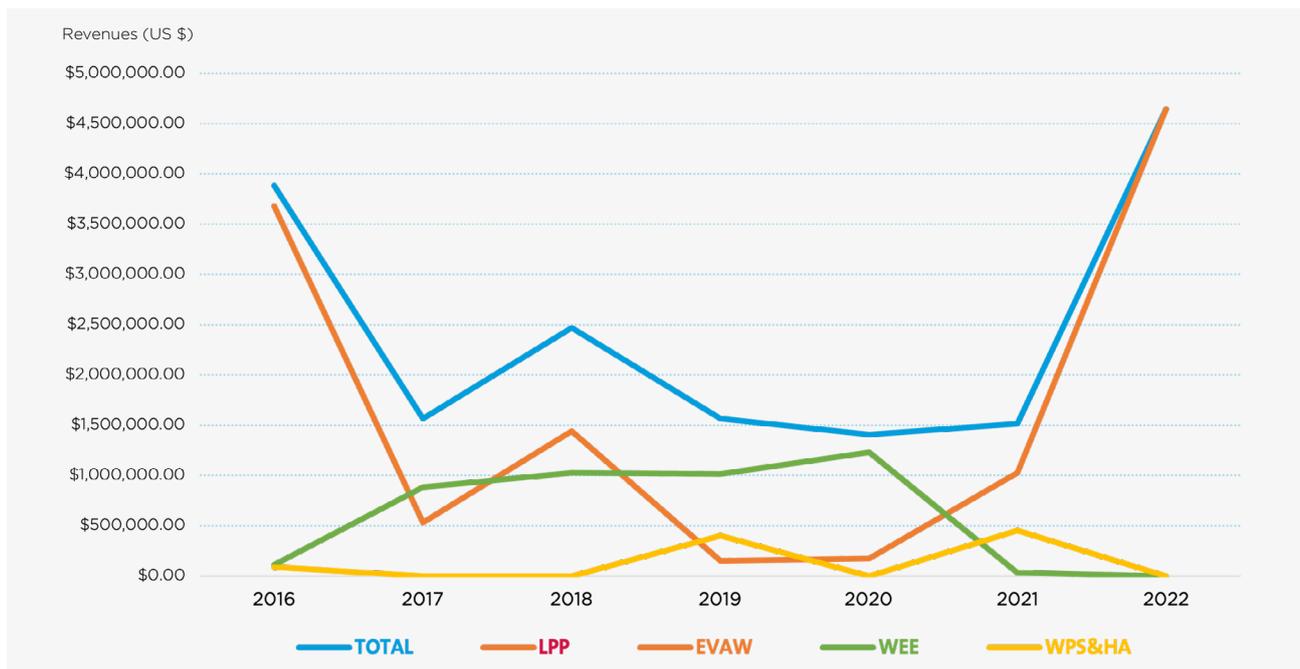
Resources were mobilized primarily under two thematic areas (Women’s Economic Empowerment and Ending Violence Against Women), with only the latter showing increasing trends, given the new European Union Rule of Law joint programme spanning 2021 to 2025, which surpasses the overall project funds mobilized in previous years.⁴⁵ In addition, the Country Office has some high-probability leads (80 per cent to 100 per cent probability) with US\$2.6 million in 2022, almost all under Ending Violence Against Women. The Women’s Economic Empowerment area is losing momentum, and there is no probable funding foreseen in 2021 and 2022. Other areas, such as leadership and participation and Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, remained low. During the Strategic Note period there were issues of projects planned without exit strategies or success in bridging gaps until new funding was confirmed (e.g. AAWAZ programme, prevention of violent extremism project).

Resource mobilization for the Sub-Offices was inadequate, and in 2020 the offices in Sindh and Punjab transitioned to become project presences due to lack of funding. The remaining Sub-Offices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan relied on one donor: as of 2021 the new European Union Rule of Law joint programme is financing 50 per cent of rental and utility costs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (the other 50 per cent funded by core) and 100 per cent of these costs in Baluchistan.⁴⁶ The Country Office confirmed US\$4.6 million in funding from the European Union for the Rule of Law joint programme headed by UNDP through 2025, which the Country Office will use to ensure the continuity of the two Sub-Offices. However, dependence on one donor presents risks, and the audit identified that the risk mitigation strategy was not comprehensive. This demonstrates how important new and diverse funding is for the maintenance of sub-offices and to avoid disruption in business continuity.

45 In July 2021, the European Union announced a joint programme with UNDP, UNODC and UN Women to reform the justice sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including the Newly Merged Districts and Balochistan. The programme runs from 2021 until 2025 and is financed with 20 million. <https://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2021/european-union-launches-a-new-rule-of-law-programme-in-khyber-pa.html>.

46 The Country Office provided the CPE+A team a breakdown of Sub-Office costs and funding sources as of May 2021.

FIGURE 8: Non-core revenues (US \$) of UN Women Pakistan Country Office



Source: Based on UN Women Regional Office financial analysis, July 2021.

Key financial performance indicators

Overall, with regard to key financial performance indicators⁴⁷ averaged over the SN period, the Country Office was in:

- the “green” zone with respect to: 1) the management ratio, meaning that the management costs (based on Institutional Budget expenditure used for funding full time staff positions) was less than 20 per cent; and 2)

the operational ratio, meaning that the funding used from the Core Budget for staffing was less than 30 per cent.

- the “yellow” zone with regards to: 1) Non-Core revenue to Core Budget ratio, which should be greater than or equal to 300 per cent in order to be “green” zone; and 2) with regards to use of core funding for staffing which should be less than 30 per cent to be “green” zone.

FIGURE 9: Key performance indicators 2018–2021.



Source: Developed by the IES team based on the Country Office Assessment Tool (COAT) dashboard.

LESSONS LEARNED



Prioritizing quality over quantity: a comprehensive and strategic design of capacity-building programmes that move beyond the one-off training approach and involve immediate and ongoing follow-up support and long-term actions to facilitate and institutionalize an enabling environment in the institutions and wider society will contribute to more impactful and sustainable results.



Attempting to reach many individuals and institutions without providing adequate follow-up support and an enabling environment to apply knowledge and skills cannot effectively shift individual behaviours or organizational practices, nor can it bring about transformational change for women. There is a need for strategic steps such as baseline capacity needs assessments (at both individual and institutional levels), ongoing measurement of learning and tracking of its application, engaging the same cohort over the long-term to provide tailored post-training support, and facilitating opportunities for those trained to train others and link up with relevant networks of support. Opportunities for projects and programmes to mutually contribute to each other and engage champions can be effective in building a supportive environment for change.



A combination of **evidence-generation and knowledge-sharing, engaging key influencers and champions in campaigns**, and providing technical support in a synergistic manner has high potential for influencing policy action, but without measurement of these synergies an understanding of what works is limited.



When influencers and champions are provided with evidence for advocacy, the message is clearer and more easily understood, which can help create an enabling environment for policy action. Simultaneously, an organization can seize upon this momentum by providing policymakers with technical support on drafting legislation or frameworks and capacity-building to carry the action forward. However, when development projects are implemented in a vertical manner, the synergies between projects and measurement of progress may be limited, i.e. campaigns on one project, technical support and training efforts on another. Careful planning across the entire programme of work and a bird's eye perspective may enhance understanding of what strategies work and how they can work together to have greater impact.



There may come a tipping point where an organization may need to pivot in a different direction due to the context, including the local political situation, the perspectives of strategic partners and the overall organizational direction and expertise. **Having the ability to let go and move on by prioritizing other or new areas of work may help restore confidence and trust and build credibility.**



On the one hand, working in an area over the long term can help to build expertise, networks and influence. Despite making valuable contributions in a particular area, being able to move forward by prioritizing different areas of work may build the credibility of an organization. On the other hand, holding on to an area where evidence based on evaluation, audit and consultations with strategic partners identifies that the organization is not continuing to add value or is best placed to contribute may deepen tensions and stagnate the full value of strategic partnerships.



The women's movement is diverse, and different perspectives and approaches to issues continue to emerge and evolve and provide a vibrant channel for expressing fundamental freedoms. Development of a clear strategy on building the women's movement and engagement with civil society may help establish clarity and enhance partners' understanding. The role of the United Nations is to support human rights by supporting and facilitating civil society to organize and express these diverse perspectives. Pakistan, like most countries, has a vibrant, highly capable and diverse civil society with a range of technical expertise. Institutions such as UN Women play an important convening role between the Government and civil society, providing avenues for dialogue and building strong platforms through which the diverse challenges of women, girls and others, particularly the most marginalized, can be voiced, and collective and individual action plans can be inspired.



Joint United Nations programmes and programming bring opportunity to leverage the expertise, networks and clout of organizations and the ability to considerably scale up the reach of gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives. However, they require careful management and time investment, just as other strategic partnerships, to ensure success.



The key stakeholders of the United Nations expect the United Nations system to act and deliver as one. Thus, it is upon the agencies to prioritize the strategic partnerships between each agency to ensure the expertise and networks are leveraged to their full potential. **Through good governance, clear roles and responsibilities, and clear communication channels, United Nations agencies can reduce the risk of overlap and inefficient use of resources.**



People are the most valuable asset of an organization like the UN. Investing in personnel and the workplace environment not only ensures their well-being but can also contribute to the credibility of the organization.



Simple steps such as creating spaces for personnel to listen and be heard can create a trusting environment and help personnel flourish in their role. Empowering personnel to reach their full potential can instil confidence and a sense of pride and motivation to deliver quality results, as has been seen in other UN Women offices that have invested in the transformative leadership capacity-building approach, such as UN Women Nepal and UN Women Cambodia.



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CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Pakistan country context for gender equality and women's empowerment is challenging, with deep-rooted patriarchal norms and high gender inequality and discrimination against women. As a small agency in Pakistan, and with only 1.1 per cent of the US\$461 million in expenditure of the United Nations system in 2020 allocated towards Outcome 8 (Gender, Equality and Dignity) of the One UN Programme, UN Women has huge scope for growth. The Country Office brings value through its strong technical expertise on gender and the production of research and evidence for decision-making and focus on the most marginalized voices. There is an immense need to change negative social norms and harmful practices, and UN Women's voice must continue to grow stronger in a crowded development space by leveraging partnerships that can amplify the collective message of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Country Office has demonstrated its ability to adapt and respond in times of crisis such as the global COVID-19 pandemic. Partners are looking to UN Women in Pakistan to provide strategic direction for gender equality and women's empowerment based on research and evidence that can contribute to their own programming efforts that can be taken to scale. The Country Office needs to clarify its niche in Pakistan and identify where it can maximize its influence and scale up efforts in gender equality and women's empowerment.

The ability of the Country Office to be responsive and flexible in its approach is essential as it gains the trust and confidence of its partners.

The presentation of the preliminary CPE+A findings and discussion on the way forward took place with members of the Evaluation Reference Group in August 2020 and fed into the final recommendations presented below. The recommendations were reviewed by the Evaluation Management Group and the Evaluation Reference Group, and subsequent changes were integrated as appropriate. The bullet points below the recommendations represent potential key actions for consideration by the Country Office, based on feasibility within its current programme of work and available resources. Some of the suggested actions were already under way given the time interval between the issuance of the preliminary findings and the finalization of the report. The level of priority and suggested time frame for implementation are indicated be-

RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

CONCLUSION 1:



Based on findings

1, 2, 3

Overall, there is room for increased visibility and understanding among stakeholders of UN Women's niche within the gender equality and empowerment of women space. The Country Office is emerging from a period of internal challenges related to management change and gaps in funding with a renewed sense of purpose and drive. This is an opportune moment for the Country Office to rethink its strategic priorities and sub-thematic focus to ensure relevance and coherence both internally and externally with the United Nations system and continue delivering relevant support during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Country Office brings value through its strong technical expertise on gender and the production of research and evidence for decision-making and focuses on the most marginalized voices in the crowded development space, where the budgets of other United Nations agencies dwarf that of UN Women in Pakistan. The country context for gender equality and women's empowerment is challenging, with deep-rooted patriarchal norms and high gender inequality and discrimination against women.

The Country Office has demonstrated its ability to adapt and respond in times of crisis such as the global COVID-19 pandemic. Partners are looking to UN Women in Pakistan to provide strategic direction for gender equality and women's empowerment based on research and evidence that can contribute to their own programming efforts that can be taken to scale. Partners are looking to UN Women to strengthen its focus in the areas of Women, Peace and Security and to bring

new thinking and approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment. They continue to see the added value the Country Office brings to its work supporting the gender machinery to translate international norms into domestic policies, strategies and actions with the fundamental aim of ending violence against women and girls.

The Country Office is moving in the right direction by engaging personnel in visioning for the future and reaching out to stakeholders to hear their perspectives. The Country Office must combine these efforts to consolidate a vision and identify a niche that is clearly based on country and stakeholder priorities and in alignment with the global priorities and resources of UN Women and the strategic direction of the United Nations system in Pakistan. The Country Office needs to build on this strategic thinking with an eye to clarifying its niche in Pakistan and identify where it can maximize its influence and scale up efforts in gender equality and women's empowerment.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Based on consultations with key stakeholders, continue refining the Country Office vision document by aligning it with the UN Women Strategic Plan, and more clearly identifying the niche of the Country Office and communicating this to partners. Reduce the number of impact areas in the Strategic Note by mainstreaming key areas while maintaining a focus on strategic areas that are aligned with needs and opportunities to influence and scale up efforts in gender equality and women's empowerment in Pakistan, primarily through the United Nations system.

The following key actions can be considered by the Country Office:

- Map needs and country priorities against the efforts of the United Nations system to identify where resource gaps remain and where the expertise of UN Women can provide catalytic influence. Align the resource mobilization and communications strategy with this vision.
- Engage key stakeholders in contributing to co-creating the vision for UN Women in Pakistan.

Relevant to: CO senior management, programme and operations personnel

Priority **HIGH** Timeframe **Q1 2022**

CONCLUSION 2:

Based on findings

1, 2, 4

UN Women’s success depends on its ability to influence the rest of the United Nations system to prioritize gender equality and women’s empowerment within their own operations and programmatic work. The Country Office has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to joint programmes and programming efforts in line with the One United Nations concept and United Nations reform principles. The newly established consolidated UNCT Working Group on Gender Equality has potential to move the coordination efforts in the right direction, i.e. beyond activities. However, an overall gender strategy, including roles and responsibilities with respect to coordination, should be clarified.

As a small agency in Pakistan, and with only 1.1 per cent of the US\$461 million in expenditure of the United Nations system in 2020 allocated towards Outcome 8 (Gender, Equality and Dignity) of the UNSDF, UN Women has huge scope for growth. More recently, the Country Office has demonstrated through its actions in support of gender parity that it recognizes the importance of prioritizing its work within the United Nations system. Furthermore, the Country Office recently recognized that it can only be strategic through the streamlining of working groups on gender equality and women’s

empowerment, which was accomplished in early 2021. Now it is time to ensure that efforts move beyond activities and campaign planning to a strategic outlook for gender equality and women’s empowerment in Pakistan. This may require the Country Office to move away from areas it has supported in the past with a view to enhancing synergies with other UN entities, such as child marriage, where other agencies have a larger organizational apparatus. The ability of the Country Office to be responsive and flexible in its approach is essential as it solidifies the trust and confidence of its partners.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

In close coordination with the Resident Coordinator’s Office, formalize and implement a UN Women coordination strategy, aligning it with UNSDF, UNCT-SWAP and embedding it within its Strategic Note. Use UN Women’s leadership role in the Gender Theme Group to coordinate efforts in potentially overlapping interventions and improve the platform for gender issues.

The following key actions can be considered by the Country Office:

- Work should be focused on 1) strategic coordination of the United Nations system driven by accountability for gender mainstreaming among agencies, gender results in UNSDF, joint programmes and UNCT-SWAP; 2) louder strategic advocacy on gender equality and women’s empowerment among donors and the Government; and 3) provisions for engaging civil society and programme partners, resulting in a more robust network. Planning for implementation of a coordination strategy should include resources dedicated to its implementation, performance indicators and regular reporting.
- Use UN Women’s leadership role in the Gender Theme Group and Outcome Group to coordinate efforts in potentially overlapping interventions and improve the coordination platforms.

Relevant to: CO senior management, programme and operations personnel

Priority
HIGH

Timeframe
Q2 2022

EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

CONCLUSION 3:



Based on findings

5,6,7

The Country Office influenced the drafting and adoption of key policies, strategies and frameworks aimed at advancing the rights of women. A combination of strategies, including evidence-generation, leveraging partnerships and relationships with key decision-makers and influencers, and providing technical support to drafting legislation, led to this success. However, as the Country Office recognizes, implementation of policies and frameworks requires further attention. Greater impact could have been achieved and sustainability ensured through an overarching capacity-building approach linking its efforts across partners, thematic areas and projects through a long-term lens.

The Country Office contributed to key policies, strategies and frameworks aimed at advancing the rights of women through the employment of key strategies, including: contributing to evidence-generation (research, knowledge products, meetings), leveraging partnerships and relationships with key decision-makers and influencers (through awareness-raising, training or communications campaigns), and providing technical support to drafting legislation (through consultant expertise). In support of the implementation of policy frameworks, the Country Office primarily focused on capacity-building, i.e. training individuals while aiming for institutional adoption of these efforts through gender-responsive budgeting, the establishment of mechanisms such as data collection systems, or curriculum adoption. Often, the various activities were completed out of sync due to delays or in a disjointed manner. Still, the products and knowledge generated provide the office with a strong foundation for future advocacy and programmatic interventions.

Although capacity building and partnership are at the core of the services that the Country Office provides, there was no clear strategy for capacity-building and partnership management across its efforts, resulting

in teams working with the same partners, yet through different projects. Partnerships with government entities have remained the focus of the Country Office. The Country Office has taken steps to solidify partnerships through the use of memoranda of understanding, which can provide a starting point for effective relationships. However, these partnerships must be proactively managed, and their successes or challenges reviewed in collaboration with partners. The network analysis demonstrated that the Country Office and United Nations partners are engaging many of the same partners. However, limited coordination both within UN Women and with other United Nations partners resulted in many individuals being reached but only limited understanding of the combined results of these efforts. The Country Office has also produced unique and creative campaigns in collaboration with partners to breakdown stereotypes and address harmful practices, which have had astounding reach. The Country Office would benefit from enhancing measurement of these efforts to understand their results and how they link with programmatic efforts and contribute towards progress on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Lessons learned from past campaigns can be applied to other topics to motivate and galvanize individuals around gender equality and women's empowerment.

Partners value and respect the mandate and gender expertise of UN Women, and the Country Office has the right elements and foundation from which to build a more effective and sustainable approach. A clearly defined capacity-building approach and coordinated partnerships could ensure the most strategic use of time and resources and increase the potential impact.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The Country Office should develop a holistic capacity-building approach or strategy and strategic partnership management that cuts across thematic areas and partners and becomes the Country Office signature service.

The following key actions can be considered by the Country Office:

- Establish a holistic strategy for building capacity from the individual to institutional level, including an enabling environment with indicators to measure meaningful progress and application of knowledge and skills over the period of the Strategic Note. This may require pooling resources and assigning a strategic partnership focal point. The strategy and training material can be adapted to the various groups or partner institutions. The Country Office communications and partnership strategy should align with the capacity-building strategy and include clear indicators for measuring success.
- Identify a governance structure with clear roles and responsibilities for strategic partnership management (managing the memoranda of understanding).

Relevant to: CO senior management, programme and operations personnel, in collaboration with Regional Office and headquarters

Priority
MEDIUM

Timeframe
Q3 2022

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

CONCLUSION 4:



Based on findings

8,9

Achieving gender equality requires a whole-of-society approach that at its roots tackles the harmful social norms that sustain discrimination and disempowerment. The Country Office has integrated the principle of leaving no one behind by engaging women with disabilities and transgender groups as well as women in the most marginalized areas of Pakistan who are without civil registration, providing opportunities for access to services and contributing to their empowerment. The Country Office must dedicate itself to capacitating its partners to effectively apply these principles in their work and to ensure contextually relevant and sensitive approaches for each group. Likewise, partners must be supported to monitor, evaluate and learn from these efforts.

A core component of UN Women's strategy for achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is its collaboration with the women's movement to mobilize civil society for gender equality and women's empowerment. Partners expect the Country Office to step up efforts in this area, and the new UN Women Strategic Plan makes this a core strategy for the organization. Thus far, the engagement of UN Women with civil society has been limited to a small number of civil society actors, primarily through a transactional approach as implementing partners. Yet huge potential remains: there is a strong foundation through networks such as the EVAWG Alliance, CSAG, the Inter-Agency Gender and Development Group and Women's

Economic Empowerment Councils, which could provide catalytic potential. This will require the Country Office's time and resources to rethink its strategy. Being inspired by the practices of other organizations (Finding 10) could be a start, e.g. mapping the efforts of civil society and entry points where UN Women's convening power can be leveraged to benefit the movement. Recognizing the diversity within the women's movement is of utmost importance. There is an immense need to change negative social norms and harmful practices, and UN Women's voice must continue to grow stronger in a crowded development space by leveraging partnerships that can amplify the collective message of gender equality and women's empowerment.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Define the social norms the Country Office will target and, in collaboration with civil society, establish a long-term strategy for building the women's movement, supporting grass-roots organizations and catalysing civil society to ensure that those representing the most marginalized voices are at the forefront of discussions to take forward gender equality and women's empowerment advocacy around these social norms.

The following key actions can be considered by the Country Office:

- Define the social norms the Country Office is targeting and integrate the collection of baseline and endline disaggregated data on these norms and the efforts of UN Women and partners to address them. Work should go beyond activities towards building an understanding of the existing social norms and how collective efforts are contributing over the long-term to changing these norms. A data collection framework should be established and integrated across projects.
- Map the efforts of civil society to understand the topics of focus and complete a network analysis with partners in the United Nations system to determine how to ensure coordinated efforts in support of strengthening the space and platforms for the women's movement and civil society. This mapping can also be a useful tool for partners and form the basis of the strategy of engagement.

Relevant to: CO senior management, programme personnel, in consultation with Regional Office and headquarters

Priority **HIGH** Timeframe **Q1 2022**

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

CONCLUSION 5:



Based on findings

7,11

Attention to Country Office governance has been initiated with a view to reducing silos and ensuring adequate capacity across thematic priorities and in the field, which may result in gaining efficiencies in delivery of results. The Country Office has had several challenges, including the loss of major funding, issues around inclusive planning and transparency, and a period without permanent senior leadership. These events affected the Country Office's positioning and funding stability, contributing to inter-personal tensions due to uncertainties in personnel contracting and business continuity and affected the overall morale of personnel. While steps have been taken towards enhancing communications across teams and encouraging an inclusive planning process, structural issues need to be addressed to support the sustainability of these effort

The Country Office was operating in ways that hampered cross-thematic collaboration and limited leveraging of synergies in the field. Steps have been taken to enhance cross-thematic interaction and the overall working environment, resulting in personnel feeling more included. Still, more needs to be done to institutionalize these efforts and ensure a staffing structure that supports it. For example, the establishment of mechanisms for peer review at the planning and reporting stages can strengthen collaboration across teams (programme,

operations, Sub-Offices). Reviewing the reporting lines of personnel in the Sub-Offices can help to empower and ensure coordinated efforts. Other UN Women offices in the region have successfully employed the transformative leadership coaching programme, which is a long-term capacity-building approach for personnel and partners in Nepal⁴⁸ and Cambodia.⁴⁹ This has resulted in the embodiment of feminist principles, which in turn has resulted in higher credibility of the Country Office among external stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Review and revise the existing staffing structure to ensure that the Country Office has adequate capacity and clear accountability to deliver its strategic priorities within its current thematic and geographical structure, with priority given in the short term to the delivery of remaining and newly funded projects and, in parallel, invest in a culture of care by adopting the transformative leadership capacity building approach and institutionalizing mechanisms to support cross-team collaboration.

The following key actions can be considered by the Country Office:

- Seek Regional Office/headquarters support to identify the best business model, including staffing structure needed to implement the approved Strategic Note, considering funding availability, e.g. matrix accountability approach.
- Carry out a staffing and capacity gap analysis of the current and anticipated structure needed to implement the approved Strategic Note, mapping the capacity and skill set required to deliver on the Strategic Note, considering resource availability.
- Establish and communicate clear roles and responsibilities and reporting lines for all personnel in line with job descriptions and organizational priorities.
- Reinforce the single point of accountability and reporting lines. For example, Portfolio Managers and Heads of Sub-Offices are responsible for their teams and report to the Representative or Deputy Representative.
- Adapt the UN Women Training Centre transformative leadership coaching programme to the Pakistan Country Office context; start with personnel and open up to partners over time.
- Establish a capacity development plan with the Regional Office that extends beyond one-off training.

Relevant to: CO senior management, programme and operations personnel, in collaboration with Regional Office and headquarters

Priority **HIGH** Timeframe **Q2 2022**

⁴⁸ UN Women Nepal and Independent Evaluation Service, Developmental Evaluation, 2021: <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=11529>.

⁴⁹ UN Women Independent Evaluation Service, Country Portfolio Evaluation Cambodia, 2021: <https://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?evaluationId=11502>.

CONCLUSION 6:

Findings

6, 7, 12

The Country Office programme management frameworks were focused on activity level efforts and did not adequately capture outcome-level change, and limited attention to the monitoring and evaluation function has impacted the ability of the office to report confidently on results and limited the overall capability to ensure good use of resources to deliver results.

There is demand by stakeholders to demonstrate the impacts of programmatic work on the lives of women and girls, not only how many participants received training, but how that information was applied and utilized to improve their well-being and realize their rights. A programmatic approach, clear definition of outcomes and identification of meaningful indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, that respond to the results chain should be a priority for the Country Office in the development of the next Strategic Note. Strong planning and monitoring will enable the Country Office to capture progress towards outcomes and better understand impact, and learning can feed into overall programme development. Once strong indicators are developed and strong monitoring and third-party verification systems established, the confidence of partners in Country Office operations will be enhanced. The Country Office will be able to clearly track the results of its efforts and base decisions on evidence to change course as needed. The Country Office primarily works with implementing partners to deliver activities; thus it is imperative that the Country Office works hand-in-hand to build the capacities of implementing partners in results-based management. This could further help in demonstrating the credibility and accountability of UN Women to both local partners and donors and ultimately support resource mobilization.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

The Country Office, with support from the Regional Office, should strengthen the overall results-based management, including planning, monitoring, data collection, validation and reporting process and establish an holistic approach to strengthening the capacity of both UN Women personnel and its implementing partners in these areas.

The following key actions can be considered by the Country Office:

- Identify implementing partner's capacity/gaps and track their progress through a performance monitoring plan; and in coordination with concerned implementing partners, develop specific and measurable quarterly/biannual work plans jointly with partners to facilitate monitoring and results management and ensure adequate PSEA mechanisms are established.
- Ensure that the monitoring function is sustainable and to the extent possible, independent from project managers where feasible (peer review could be used in the absence of a dedicated monitoring and evaluation officer); and that the methodology for monitoring missions is harmonized, to the extent feasible, and used by all stakeholders involved.
- Devise and implement an annual risk-based work plan for field-monitoring visits to project and partner sites, including independent validation of data reported by partners through post-implementation assessments, spot-checks and surveys of beneficiaries.
- Harmonize monitoring and reporting templates, which will assist in integrating the data collected and validated into reports to donors and corporate reports; take stock of all donor requirements, especially non-standard; and include in regular meetings a discussion of ongoing donor requirements and time frames, issues encountered and potential solutions. Regularly obtain donor feedback on the reports submitted.
- Enhance pipeline and ongoing portfolio management by assigning formal accountability to portfolio and project managers, e.g. documenting accountability in their terms of reference or Performance Management and Development Tool. Develop and adopt a project assurance process to ensure that project designs, including the planned activities and exit strategy, are effective and feasible to implement.
- Mandate that all projects include a community and beneficiary needs assessment; a feasibility assessment considering the local context, risks and challenges; clear selection criteria and a process for identification and selection of beneficiaries, including independent verification of selected beneficiaries against the agreed criteria, their feedback on training and other services or inputs provided; and a post-implementation impact assessment. A grievance mechanism should also be put in place.

Relevant to: CO senior management, programme and operations personnel, in collaboration with Regional Office and headquarters

Priority
MEDIUM

Timeframe
Q2 2022

CONCLUSION 7:

Based on findings

13

The resource fluctuations and resource gaps experienced by the Country Office during the first half of the Strategic Note period indicate that a more proactive approach to managing relationships with donors and other partners and enhanced planning for resource mobilization are necessary. The rationale for maintaining Sub-Offices is strong, however, diversification of resources to support sub-office operation should also be prioritized with a view to ensuring business continuity. Proactive thought leadership and strategic visioning for the office ahead of the development of the new Strategic Note should be continued.

The Country Office has had long-standing donors dedicated to supporting its efforts. While these relationships should be nurtured and maintained, it is important to diversify the resource base. The Country Office has also been successful in mobilizing resources through joint programmes with United Nations partners in the area of rule of law, providing the basis for future efforts of the Country Office. This demonstrates that partners seek gender expertise, and UN Women can leverage its partnerships to identify these entry points in other areas. As the past year has shown through UN Women's global efforts around the Generation Equality Forum, financing

for gender equality is available, and UN Women can play a strategic role in facilitating action and mobilizing financing for gender equality and women's empowerment.⁵⁰

While the Sub-Office architecture is relevant within the context of Pakistan and facilitates UN Women's reach and influence at the field level, the financial sustainability is at risk. A more strategic focusing of efforts through the Sub-Offices could help to consolidate both financial and human resources in support of the delivery of results.

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Finalize and implement the resource mobilization strategy of the Country Office with realistic targets as a part of its advocacy vision and strategy (see Recommendation 1). Regularly monitor the strategy for effectiveness, revise if necessary and address any related implications.

The following key actions can be considered by the Country Office:

- Finalize and implement a resource mobilization strategy with realistic targets as a part of the Country Office advocacy vision and strategy (see Recommendation 1).
- Regularly monitor the strategy for effectiveness, revise if necessary and address any related implications.
- Establish a plan for engagement with donors and other partners to provide updates on progress.

Relevant to: CO senior management, programme and operations personnel, Regional Office and headquarters

Priority
HIGH

Timeframe
Q1 2022

⁵⁰ New York Times, Emma Goldberg, 30 July 2021: Philanthropists Award \$40 Million to Help Advance Gender Equity, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/29/us/equality-cant-wait-winners.html>.

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TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

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



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