



COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

BRAZIL

STRATEGIC NOTE 2017–2022



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This evaluation process included consultation with a diverse range of actors who were central to its completion. Two hundred and fifty individuals from various groups participated in primary data collection and shared their perspectives as reflected in this report. We thank them for their time and effort invested in the evaluation.

The Independent Evaluation and Audit Services of UN Women (IEAS) led the evaluation under the supervision of Michael Francis Craft (Regional Evaluation Specialist for the Americas and the Caribbean region). The evaluation team comprised Melissa Andrade (Senior Evaluator) and Caio Csermak (Research Analyst).

The Evaluation Reference Group benefited from the participation of external stakeholders who provided valuable input into the key evaluation products, including representatives from the Brazilian Cooperation Agency, the International Olympic Committee, the National Association of Ancestral Indigenous Women Warriors, the Association of Black Women's Organizations, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office in Brazil. We thank these partners for sharing their guidance and expertise.

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EVALUATION TEAM:

Michael Francis Craft, Regional Evaluation Specialist and team lead

Melissa Andrade, Senior Evaluator

Caio Csermak, Research Analyst

EVALUATION MANAGEMENT:

UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS)

Inga Sniukaite, Chief, UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES)

Lisa Sutton, Director, UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS)

Design and layout: **Yamrote A. Haileselassie**

Copy-editing: **Lisa Ernst**

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ACRONYMS

ABC	Brazilian Cooperation Agency
ANMIGA	National Association of Ancestral Indigenous Women Warriors
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSO	civil society organization
CSW	United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
DRF	Development Results Framework
FENATRAD	National Federation of Domestic Workers
GDP	gross domestic product
IEAS	UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEA	Institute of Applied Economic Research
LEAP	Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection joint programme
LGBTQI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
NGO	non-governmental organization
OEEF	Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness Framework
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OWLA	One Win Leads to Another project
R4V	Response for Venezuelans
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
SNPM	National Secretariat for Policies for Women
SWAP	System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COUNTRY
PORTFOLIO
EVALUATION
BRAZIL

This report presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) of the UN Women Brazil Country Office conducted between December 2021 and July 2022. A CPE is a systematic assessment of the normative, coordination and operational aspects of UN Women's contribution to development results related to gender equality and women's empowerment at the country level.

Background of UN Women in Brazil

UN Women has been present in Brazil since the organization's establishment in January 2011. The office was initially responsible for the Southern Cone countries and in 2013 assumed the status of a Country Office. The UN Women presence in Brazil was built on the work and legacy of UNIFEM, which was established in 1992 in the country. The Strategic Note is the main planning tool for UN Women's work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through the implementation of its integrated triple mandate of normative, coordination and operational work. It initially covered the 2017–2021 period and was later extended to 2022. A midterm review led to changes to prioritize the COVID-19 pandemic response, streamline the results framework and strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus.

UN Women Brazil provides integrated policy advice, capacity development and technical assistance, social mobilization and advocacy, and data and knowledge generation, among other functions to inform policymaking and law-making. UN Women is the only United Nations entity with the exclusive mandate to promote gender equality, including leading and coordinating the accountability of the United Nations system with regard to the respective gender equality mandates of its member organizations. UN Women also provides inter-governmental normative support at the global and national levels, as well as direct support and service delivery.

BRAZIL COUNTRY CONTEXT



Sixth largest population in the world with more than **212 million inhabitants**; largest country in terms of both size and population in the Latin America region.



High level of human development – ranked 84 of 189 countries – and middle-income country, although aggregated figures hide considerable inequalities among different population groups.



Ninety-fifth in the world on the Gender Inequality Index. Women represent nearly 52 per cent of the Brazilian population but hold **less than 15 per cent of the seats in parliament.**



Structural inequalities across income, gender, **race**, ethnicity, age and location continue to be key determinants for access to rights and services.



Data from 2020 shows that 34.5 per cent of homicides of women were classified as **femicides**, which increased to **1,350 cases** of which **61.6 per cent of the victims were black women.**



The **COVID-19 pandemic** increased the exposure of certain population groups to situations of **risk and violence.**

Evaluation purpose, objectives and use

The purpose of the evaluation was to foster both accountability and learning through a participatory approach assuming a summative and formative focus by assessing results achieved and providing input to the design of the next Strategic Note of the UN Women Brazil Country Office. Objectives of the evaluation included to:

- Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment as defined in the Strategic Note.
- Analyse how a human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the design and implementation of the Strategic Note.
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to the development of the next Strategic Note, considering the recovery and response to COVID-19.
- Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples of innovation that support gender equality and human rights.

Intended users and uses of the evaluation

The primary intended users of this evaluation are UN Women management and Country Office personnel, the UN Women Executive Board, the national Government of Brazil and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Intended uses include: learning and generation of knowledge for key stakeholders on the promotion of the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda in Brazil; strategic decision-making for the UN Women Brazil Country Office and key counterparts; Accountability as a key principle of the work in the United Nations system; and capacity development and mobilization, which was part of the whole evaluation process from planning and design to the dissemination of results.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY



Gender-responsive evaluation



Mixed methods for triangulating evidence



Theory-based analysis



Deeper analysis of a project sample and project case study



Outcome mapping and contribution analysis

118 people consulted

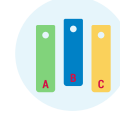


97%
Women

3%
Men

29 semi-structured interviews with 30 UN Women personnel and partners and 22 focus groups with 88 stakeholders and beneficiaries

100+ documents analysed



Planning documents, reports, documents, national strategic documentation, knowledge products, midterm review, internal audit and others

132 respondents to 4 surveys



UN Women personnel survey: 39
Stakeholder survey: 63
One Win Leads to Another (OWLA) project trained CSOs: 25
OWLA project coalition: 5

UN WOMEN IN BRAZIL: KEY FACTS

23.1 M
US\$ total budget

The Strategic Note 2017–2022 had a total budget of US\$23.1 million with marked annual growth since 2017. The Country Office was supported by 31 donors throughout Strategic Note implementation.

41
personnel

Country Office personnel included 8 positions on the operations team, 2 in the Programme Management Support Unit, and 28 in the Programme Unit, in addition to the Representative, a Coordination Specialist and a Communications Associate.

3
main outcome areas

Resources were distributed evenly across thematic portfolios



Governance and Participation 30%



Women's Economic Empowerment 27%



Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls 23%

Conclusions and recommendations

CONCLUSION 1

UN Women was recognized as a key voice on the gender agenda in Brazil and found to have contributed to achieving gender equality results with an array of partners. UN Women also demonstrated its relevance in the context of COVID-19, adapting to respond to the needs of women and girls in a crisis context. There was a demand for continued and expanded dialogue on COVID-19 and other issues, as well as potential for enhancing coherence and consistency among the myriad of activities within the Country Office.

Over the period of Strategic Note implementation, UN Women leveraged its work through a wide range of partnerships, including with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), CSOs, subnational governments, the parliament, the private sector and other multi-stakeholder forums.

The Country Office was responsive to grass-roots movements representing groups such as indigenous populations, black women, domestic workers and Venezuelan migrant women. This demonstrated its niche and value in engaging with relevant groups in situations of increased vulnerability in line with the “leave no one behind” principle.

There remained a demand for more dialogue, advocacy and collaboration in different sectors, which indicated potential for further enhancing partnerships.

CONCLUSION 2

UN Women Brazil played an effective leadership role in the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity; enhanced empowerment, leadership and political participation of historically excluded groups; and positioned the gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda with the private sector. It also helped to develop capacity at the individual and institutional levels to support long-term change in some areas. Increased involvement of state institutions at different levels would have enhanced the potential for more sustainable results, along with stronger attention ascribed to sustainability issues in project design

Effective use of the UN Women coordination mandate was evidenced by the Country Office leadership of the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity and the application of the UNCT System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNCT-SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard, including the intersectionality with race into the tool’s methodology as well as systematic follow-up with partners. Progress by United Nations agencies in mainstreaming gender presented a corresponding set of wider actions, programming and opportunities for joint work and enhanced dialogue with the system.

UN Women Brazil implemented projects with a strong potential for gender transformative change by targeting deeper causes of gender inequality through the promotion of the empowerment, leadership and political participation of traditionally excluded groups.

On the other hand, there were opportunities for more strategic engagement with the legislative branch on advocacy and policy debate, as well as with the private sector and other partners. Taking into account the key role of state institutions in developing public policy to maintain results over time, sustainability strategies could be more explicitly embedded into project design.

HIGHLIGHTED RESULTS ACHIEVED

- UN Women contributed to increasing the political participation of women facing multiple forms of discrimination and reinforcing the implementation of electoral legislation for women.
- Through the Win-Win: Gender Equality Means Good Business project, UN Women promoted corporate culture in the private sector, encouraging the participation of women in leadership positions and diversity inclusion. A total of 7,759 companies accessed knowledge/tools by participating in events.
- The United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity in Brazil, led by UN Women, enhanced its management over time with a structured approach to deliver quality policy guidelines and tools such as the UNCT SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard.
- UN Women supported a gender-based response for Venezuelan migrants in Brazil and the provision of vocational training for Venezuelan women, which continued during the pandemic. Sex- and age-disaggregated data is now mandatory for Response for Venezuelans (R4V) partners.
- UN Women contributed to promoting a legal and social environment that is more conducive to the protection of women and girls. The One Win Leads to Another project reached nearly 1.9 million people via social media, and 1,200 girls benefited from its curriculum.

CONCLUSION 3

UN Women made significant strides to enhance the systematization of its work modalities by establishing clear procedures and expected results and adopting stronger accountability practices in the Country Office. Challenges remained at the operational level, which negatively affected continuity of actions over time, human resource stability and personnel workloads.

The Country Office made advances to enhance accountability practices, such as establishing clear rules, procedures and tools for planning processes and knowledge management; developing theories of change for the Strategic Note and its main programmes; and monitoring results to support decision-making and enhance institutional accountability. This has brought about important gains in organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Nevertheless, several problems hindered the implementation capacity of the office, in particular high turnover rates, communication issues with partners, as well as perceptions of high workloads and a stressful work environment.

Modalities such as direct implementation also imposed a high burden on the office, which was not well adapted to deal with grass-roots movements and informal organizations. Results-based management practices, including monitoring capacity and the indicator framework, would enhance the ability of the Country Office to track, measure and report on potential impacts.

CONCLUSION 4

UN Women was responsive to the principle to leave no one behind and largely incorporated populations in situations of vulnerability into its work. This helped to address deeper causes of inequality through access to power, resources and opportunities, leading to the empowerment of women and girls. There remained scope to more explicitly target other key populations in line with United Nations principles, such as persons with disabilities.

Most Country Office projects over the period incorporated the leave no one behind principle, and work was largely focused on addressing the needs of populations in situations of vulnerability from a political, economic and social point of view. The work of UN Women has been on social mobilization and evidence-based advocacy, capacity development, knowledge-sharing, policy debate and training. All activities aim to question the basis of inequality between women and men. In this sense, the nature of the activities of the Strategic Note has been generally oriented towards supporting gender transformative change. Gender inequality was addressed through an intersectional approach in which income, ethnic and racial disparities appeared as mutually connected. This resulted in a more integrated response from UN Women Brazil, which tailored relevant parts of its projects to specific populations such as domestic workers and black, indigenous and quilombola women. The Country Office embodied a model of change oriented towards structural impact that will only be validated in the long run. There was nonetheless still scope for stronger mainstreaming of age and disability perspectives into these portfolios, which were absent with the exception of one joint programme.

RECOMMENDATION 1



Implement measures in the **conceptualization, execution, and monitoring of the next Strategic Note** to further enhance programmatic focus and coherence, building on the notable gains made since the midterm review exercise with a view to enhancing the strategic positioning of the Country Office.

RECOMMENDATION 2



Review the **partnership framework and capacity development strategy** with a view to foster links with the Government, systematize private sector engagement, clarify the role of the Civil Society Advisory Group and engagement with CSOs, and enhance dialogue with donors and United Nations partners in Brazil.

RECOMMENDATION 3



Further **promote a culture of collaboration and innovation**, while also strengthening results-based management practices to embed a more systematic data, monitoring and reporting ecosystem for capturing and communicating results and fine-tuning Country Office programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4



In the next Strategic Note, build on the Country Office's **track record of programming the leave no one behind principle** with a stronger focus on intersecting types of vulnerability.



Photo ©UN Women/Camille Miranda

1

Introduction

This section provides an analysis of the national context, particularly the challenges related to Brazilian socio-economic development and the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as an introduction to UN Women's country programme in Brazil.

1.1 Brazil country context

The Federative Republic of Brazil has the sixth largest population in the world, with more than 212 million inhabitants.¹ It is the largest country in terms of both size and population in the Latin America region. The country is a federation formed by 26 states and the Federal District and includes 5,570 municipalities.² Brazil is considered to have a high level of human development (ranked 84 of 189 countries)³ and is a middle-income country, although aggregated figures hide considerable inequalities among different population groups, especially between men and women and between the white and non-white populations. The country ranks ninety-fifth in the world on the Gender Inequality Index.⁴

Since 2015, Brazil has faced a gross domestic product (GDP) crisis that combines low or negative GDP growth and rising inflation, especially for food and fuel. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the situation and led to a further reduction in economic growth.⁵ In the period of the Strategic Note, there was a transition of national, state and local governments, with changes in priorities, strategies and personnel.

Although some progress towards greater gender equality in Brazil has been achieved over the past decades, women continue to face major social and structural obstacles to greater equality. The situation has worsened with recent political, economic and health crises in Brazil, particularly for those who face intersecting forms of discrimination. Data indicate that women earn on average less than men and dedicate more time to care and domestic work.⁶ This is especially the case for black women, as compared with white men and white women.

In terms of violence against women, the number of femicides has increased recently in Brazil, as shown by the *Atlas da Violência – Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública*.⁷ Data from 2020 show that 34.5 per cent of homicides of women were classified as femicide. There has been an increase of 11.9 per cent in the number of femicides registered in Brazil, from 1,206 in 2018 to 1,350 in 2020. Of these, 61.6 per cent of the victims were black women and 81.5 per cent of the femicides were perpetrated by partners/ex-partners. In 2020, 60,926 cases of sexual violence were registered, of which 60.6 per cent of the victims were 13 years of age

and younger. Moreover, 86.9 per cent of the victims were female, and in 85.2 per cent of the cases the perpetrator was known.

From this total, 50.7 per cent of the victims were black, 48.7 per cent were white, 0.3 per cent were indigenous and 0.3 per cent were Asian-Brazilians.⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic has indicated further consequences in increasing the exposure of certain population groups to situations of risk and violence, as well as more broadly deepening structural inequalities across income, gender, race, ethnicity, age and location that, in turn, are determinants for access to rights and services.

In terms of political participation, in 2009 Brazil implemented a mandatory 30 per cent quota for women candidates in elections to the legislative branch. This considerably increased the number of women candidates, but there has been a limited effect on the number of women elected, with representation remaining low. In 2017, women represented only 10.5 per cent of the seats in the National Congress and 37.4 per cent of leadership positions in private companies.⁹ For the 2022 elections, an amendment to the Constitution will require that at least 30 per cent of the public resources sent to political parties for financing electoral campaigns be allocated to female candidates, which may increase female representation in the legislative and executive branches.

While women represent nearly 52 per cent of the Brazilian population,¹⁰ they hold less than 15 per cent of seats in the parliament.¹¹ Intersecting with structural gender inequalities, Brazil also faces marked racial inequality, which is important to emphasize considering the United Nations principle to leave no one behind. While more than half of the population self-declares as black (*preto* or *pardo*), their political representation following the 2018 congressional elections was 24.4 per cent in total and only 2 per cent for black women.¹² In terms of ethnic representation, only one congresswoman out of 513 congressmen/women is indigenous. In addition, extreme poverty affected 8.8 per cent of the black population, compared with 3.6 per cent of the white population, with 32.9 per cent of the black population living below the poverty line compared with 15.4 per cent of the white population.¹³

1 https://www.ibge.gov.br/apps/populacao/projecao/box_popclock.php.

2 <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/panorama>.

3 <https://www.br.undp.org/content/brazil/pt/home/presscenter/articles/2020/pnud-faz-lancamento-nacional-do-relatorio-de-desenvolvimento-hum.html>.

4 http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2020_statistical_annex_table_5.xlsx.

5 <https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-sala-de-imprensa/2013-agencia-de-noticias/releases/30165-pib-cai-4-1-em-2020-e-fecha-o-ano-em-r-7-4-trilhoes>.

6 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101551_informativo.pdf.

7 <https://forumseguranca.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/6-a-violencia-contra-meninas-e-mulheres-no-ano-pandemico.pdf>.

8 <https://forumseguranca.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/7-os-registros-de-violencia-sexual-durante-a-pandemia-de-covid-19.pdf>.

9 <https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/index.php/biblioteca-catalogo?view=detalhes&id=2101784>.

10 <https://educa.ibge.gov.br/jovens/conheca-o-brasil/populacao/18320-quantidade-de-homens-e-mulheres.html>.

11 <https://www.ipu.org/parliament/BR/Brazil> (accessed May 2022).

12 https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/livros/liv101681_informativo.pdf.

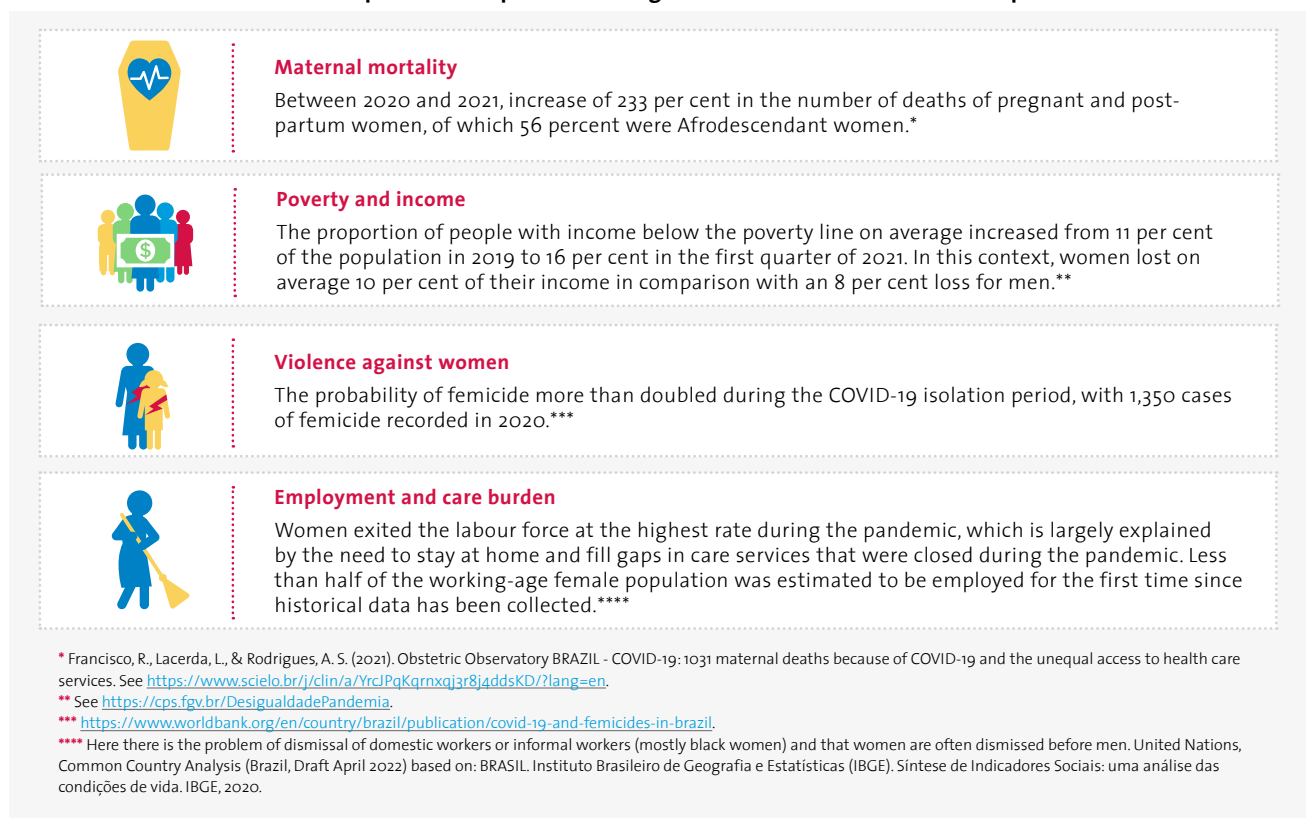
13 Idem.

In terms of public policy, the National Secretariat for Policies for Women (SNPM), the main body promoting public policies for women at the federal level, had seen its political status changed several times, including in 2015 and again in 2018. More recently, SNPM became part of the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights. The ministry covers a broad set of issues, and while it would be expected that resources be commensurate to the thematic challenges, in 2022 the ministry had the lowest budget in four years.¹⁴

Brazil has made progress in certain areas of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including increasing women's political representation (SDG targets 3.1,¹⁵ 3.7¹⁶ and 5.5¹⁷) as well as advancing reproductive health, such as decreasing the rate of teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality (SDG target 5.6¹⁸).

The COVID-19 pandemic nonetheless has limited access to key services that may have a negative effect on these indicators,^{19,20} while also exacerbating existing gender inequalities and risking disproportionate impacts on indigenous populations, people of African descent and other population groups in situations of vulnerability, such as children, adolescents, women, *quilombola*, Romani, rural populations, prison populations, migrants and refugees (Figure 1).²¹ The country continues to also face challenges to progress on other key SDG indicators related to discrimination and violence against women and girls, as indicated above (SDG targets 5.1,²² 5.2²³ and 5.3²⁴), and to women's economic empowerment, which has been impacted by the economic crisis.

FIGURE 1. The socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic magnified trends and structural inequalities



¹⁴ https://www.inesc.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/8-de-Marco_Orcamento.docx.pdf.

¹⁵ By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.

¹⁶ By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

¹⁷ Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

¹⁸ Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

¹⁹ Spotlight Report on the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in Brazil 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021.

²⁰ <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/issue-brief-covid-19-and-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5006>.

²¹ UN Framework for the socio-economic response and recovery to Covid-19. United Nations Brazil, 2020, p.34.

²² End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

²³ Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

²⁴ Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

1.2 UN Women Brazil

Background

UN Women has been present in Brazil since the organization was established in January 2011. Its office was initially responsible for the Southern Cone countries,²⁵ and in 2013 it assumed the status of Country Office. The UN Women presence in Brazil was built on the work and legacy of UNIFEM, which was established in 1992 in the country. The Strategic Note represents the main planning tool for UN Women's work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through the implementation of an integrated triple mandate of normative, coordination and operational work.

Strategic Note

The Strategic Note initially covered the 2017–2021 period and was later extended to 2022.²⁶ The document was designed in alignment with the UN Women Global Strategic Plan 2014–2017, with five impact areas. In 2018, the Strategic Note was realigned with the UN Women Global Strategic Plan 2018–2021, which resulted in Impact 5²⁷ being absorbed by Impact 1. In 2020, the Strategic Note was consolidated to its current three-impact structure following a midterm review²⁸, which called for more focus. There was a strategic prioritization, as well as alignment with national priorities in the area of women's rights. This was also in response to the recommendations of an internal audit in 2019. The main objectives of the midterm review were to assess the relevance, appropriateness and coherence of the Strategic Note at national level and to assess effectiveness and efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of results. The Strategic Note was accordingly revised to include the following key changes: prioritization of the COVID-19 pandemic response, exclusion of the humanitarian action outcome area (Impact 4²⁹), simplification of the results framework, and strengthening of the humanitarian–development nexus. The Country Office continued activities in the humanitarian area but linked them to other thematic portfolios, aiming to shift from a humanitarian to a development focus.³⁰ This was achieved by merging the programmes on socio-economic integration of migrant and refugee women with Impact 2 (Women's Economic Empowerment).

Key partners

The Brazilian international cooperation – whether foreign assistance received or technical cooperation offered abroad – is operationalized through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), an agency created in 1987 as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since its creation, ABC has been responsible for foreign assistance and technical cooperation in Brazil, also working with United Nations funds and projects, especially through the United Nations Partnership Framework in Brazil for Sustainable Development. Brazil was one of the 51 founding members of the United Nations in 1945 and has had fixed representation in Brazil since 1947. The UNCT in Brazil is comprised of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes operating in the country, such as UN Women, and is led by the Resident Coordinator and her office. In terms of gender equality, Brazil is party to all of the major human rights treaties and normative frameworks.

The United Nations system in Brazil offers technical assistance and cooperation in order to promote the implementation of state obligations under these normative frameworks by the State and to develop the capacity of rights holders to claim their rights and actively participate in the fulfilment of their rights. In this context, UN Women Brazil provides integrated policy advice, capacity development and technical assistance, social mobilization and advocacy, and data and knowledge generation, among other functions, to inform policymaking and law-making. UN Women is the only United Nations entity with the exclusive mandate to promote gender equality, including to lead and coordinate the accountability of the United Nations system for the respective gender equality mandates of its member organizations. However, beyond UN Women, all agencies and the UNCT are now accountable for gender mainstreaming and the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women also provides intergovernmental normative support at the global and national levels, as well as direct support and service delivery.

²⁵ “The Southern Cone region traditionally includes Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Southern Brazil. UN Women includes Brazil as a whole in its regional strategy for the Southern Cone ». Information available at Thematic Evaluation of the Contribution of UN-Women to Prevent Violence against Women and Expand Access to Services Final Report Volume III — Case Studies, August 2013, Annex 1, page 3. See <https://gate.unwomen.org/EvaluationDocument/Download?evaluationDocumentID=3665>.

²⁶ The Strategic Note was extended by one year to end in 2022 in order to remain aligned with the United Nations Strategic Partnership Framework (UNSPDF) 2017–2021, which had also been extended by one year.

²⁷ Impact 5: Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities.

²⁸ UN Women Brazil Strategic Note 2017–2021, midterm review, 2020.

²⁹ Impact 4: Peace and security and humanitarian action are shaped by women's leadership and participation.

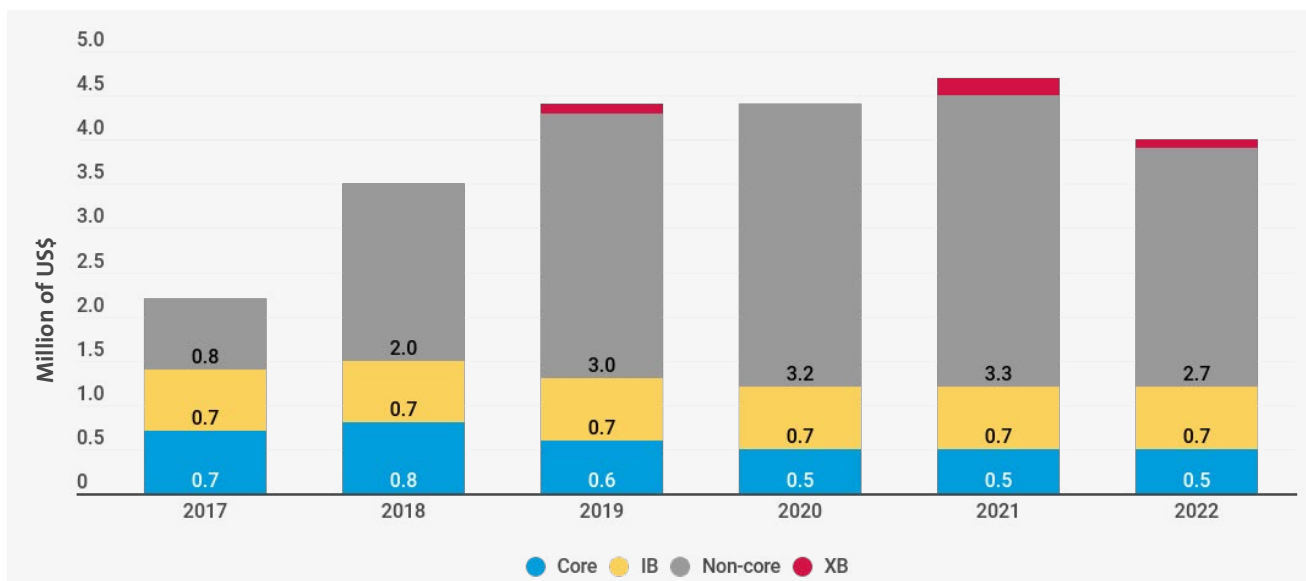
³⁰ For example, its work on strengthening the gender perspective in the humanitarian response for Venezuelans in Brazil (Contingency plan to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the planning process for the national chapter of the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan); delivering training in partnership with UNHCR and local organizations, workshops to migrants and refugees, and on gender equality under the scope of Brave Is Not Violent; and supporting a private sector network for women (IRME) that develops entrepreneurship training for refugees and migrants.

Resources

The Strategic Note 2017–2022 had a total budget of US\$23.1 million, with a substantial increase in the annual budget from 2017 onward. Most resources were non-core, followed by institutional budget, core and extra-budgetary.³¹ There was significant growth of non-core funding over the period, while the core resources have decreased (Figure 2). The Strategic Note had 31 donors along its implementation, with the European Commission and the International Olympic Committee contributing amounts significantly higher than those of the other donors.

Thematically, resources were allocated in a balanced manner between Governance and Participation (30 per cent), Women’s Economic Empowerment (27 per cent) and Ending Violence against Women and Girls (23 per cent). The Country Office had 8 positions on the Operations team headed by the Operations Analyst, 2 positions on the Programme Management Support Unit headed by the Programme Specialist, and 28 positions on the Programme Unit headed by the Deputy Representative, as well as a Coordination Specialist, a Communications Associate and the Representative (see organization chart in Annex 6.8).

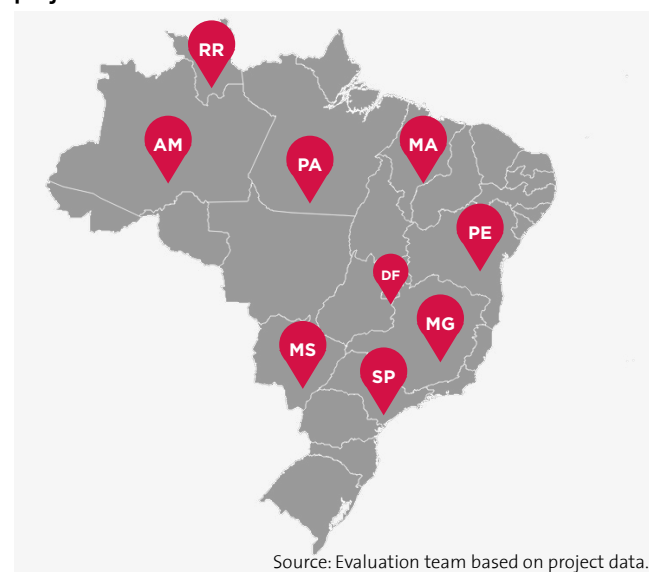
FIGURE 2 UN Women Brazil Country Office budget sources, 2017–2022



Geographical and programmatic areas

UN Women interventions were concentrated geographically at the national level, being implemented by the Country Office in Brasília, where most personnel were located. Since 2018, UN Women has had a field team in Roraima State in the context of the response to the mixed influx of migrants and refugees from Venezuela, although its presence on the field has decreased due to COVID-19 safety protocols. In addition, throughout the Strategic Note cycle, UN Women had personnel in São Paulo city (São Paulo State), Itabira (Minas Gerais State), Boa Vista (Roraima State) and Rio de Janeiro city (Rio de Janeiro State) (Figure 3), while projects implemented or supported by UN Women covered other Brazilian states. Currently, UN Women has two project offices in operation, one in São Paulo and another in Roraima.

FIGURE 3 UN Women territorial coverage through its projects



Source: Evaluation team based on project data.

³¹ “Core” resources are regular and non-earmarked resources; “non-core” resources (earmarked or other resources) are contributions from any donor for specific programmes or themes; the “institutional budget” (IB) comprises regular resources applied to Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework results; and “extrabudgetary” (XB) funds are cost recovery income from non-core voluntary contributions.

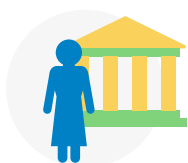
The Strategic Note theory of change focuses on developing capacities of duty bearers, especially state actors, to fulfil obligations or commitments to women's human rights; and of rights holders, especially women facing intersected forms of discrimination, to claim their human rights and hold duty bearers accountable for their commitments. It is expected that increased capacities of duty bearers to formulate and implement laws and policies and of rights holders to influence decision-making processes and promote women's human rights will lead to increased women's leadership and political participation, increased women's economic empowerment and a life free from violence for all women and girls, resulting in gender equality, women's empowerment and full enjoyment of women's human rights.

The UN Women programme in Brazil was focused on three Outcome Areas:

1. Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems.
2. Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy.
3. All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence.

Although the Country Office organized its programme around these three Outcome Areas, there were many cross-cutting projects and activities, as explored in this evaluation. Accordingly, results should be considered as the cumulative efforts of the Country Office (see further elaboration under section 3.1, Relevance and coherence).

MAIN OUTCOME AREAS OF UN WOMEN IN BRAZIL



Governance and national planning

Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems



Women's economic empowerment

Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy



Elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls

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



Photo ©Midian Cristina

2

Evaluation approach

This section presents a summary of the overall evaluation approach. A more detailed explanation is provided in the annexes to this report.

2.1 Purpose, objectives and approach

The purpose of the evaluation was to foster both accountability and learning through a participatory approach, assuming a summative and formative focus by assessing results achieved and providing input into the design of the next Strategic Note. The evaluation sought to meet the following primary objectives:³²

- Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment as defined in the Strategic Note;
- Analyse how a human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the design and implementation of the Strategic Note;
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to the development of the next Strategic Note, considering the recovery and response to COVID-19; and
- Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples of innovation that support gender equality and human rights.

The scope of this exercise included all activities undertaken by the Brazil Country Office under its Strategic Note across UN Women's triple mandate. Programme work was considered in relation to the thematic areas established by the UN Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021 with a view to contribute to positioning within the new UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025. The geographical scope of the evaluation was Brazil, as UN Women addressed the legal and policy framework within the implementation of its threefold mandate in the country. Most interviews included stakeholders at a national and local level (especially Itabira in Minas Gerais State, Rio de Janeiro city in Rio de Janeiro State and Boa Vista in Roraima State) where key UN Women interventions have been implemented. A systematic assessment of the impact of Country Office interventions on its beneficiaries and their contexts was not part of the scope of this evaluation, as this type of analysis would require resources and methods beyond the design of this exercise. Nevertheless, beneficiaries were consulted when pertinent to assess specific UN Women interventions, and outcome-level analysis identified to some extent pathways to impact.

2.2 Design of the evaluation

The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach through a reconstructed theory of change from the Strategic Note as a way of identifying possible gaps and including what was not initially envisioned at the design of the Strategic Note (Annex 6.7). Based on the initial desk review, interviews and inception workshop, assumptions were identified in the reconstructed theory of change and tested through contribution analysis. They were added as additional evaluation questions to be explored. The evaluation applied evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (see Annex 6.2), with key questions and sub-questions to articulate areas of investigative focus.

In addition, the evaluation used a cluster approach to select a sample of projects that were analysed in greater depth based on sampling criteria.³³

Sampled projects included a more in-depth analysis through the following methods: focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and one case study. The evaluation process used a gender-responsive approach where a careful selection of interviewees was considered, while exploring the factors that may help or pose obstacles to the empowerment of women. The principle of leaving no one behind was also considered, including a disability lens, through incorporating into the evaluation questions and analysis approaches. This recognizes the fact that women and girls, including people who identify as disabled; lesbian, gay, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+); black; *quilombola* and indigenous; as well as migrants and refugees, face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. At the portfolio level, in-depth analysis was performed to answer the evaluation questions (see Annexes 6.5 and 6.6).

³² To not duplicate the midterm review coverage in 2020, secondary objectives included: (1) assessing the relevance of UN Women's contribution to the intervention at national level and alignment with international agreements and conventions and (2) providing insights on realized synergies between its three mandates (normative, coordination and operations) and internal as well as external coherence.




³³ Including (1) high relevance in terms of financial investment, (2) high potential for replication, (3) strong availability of information and (4) Innovative character

2.3 Limitations

The main methodological limitations to the evaluation were addressed through mitigation strategies listed in Table 1, namely the lack of field visits and face-to-face data collection given the ongoing social distancing measures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. This was mitigated through intensive and comprehensive primary data collection, which included a large sample of stakeholders, including women living in remote areas who were also

contacted to mitigate potential bias in the sample. All interviews, focus groups and workshops were conducted remotely. While monitoring data reported by the Country Office provided an important indication of results achievement for effectiveness, issues with the quality and completeness required the data to be complemented by other sources.

TABLE 1. Strategies employed to address key limitations

AREA	LIMITATIONS	MITIGATION STRATEGIES
 CONTEXT	Social distancing measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for field visits and face-to-face data collection	Increase the number of invitations for interviews and propose alternative digital platforms to interviewees (Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp and telephone)
		Use online collaborative tools (Mural) for enhanced interaction and teamwork to facilitate engagement and live feedback in the evaluation design and drafting phases
 PROGRAMME DESIGN	Limited data on results of capacity development activities due to project-level monitoring gaps	Include participants in UN Women capacity development activities in interview and focus group samples; include capacity development questions in stakeholder survey
 DATA	Low response rates from internal and external stakeholders to primary data requests	Conduct targeted interviews with other stakeholders who are able to provide data about the same area or project
		Extend survey deadlines and targeted follow-up through individualized reminders
	Lack of data on key initiatives of the office	Increase the number and types of interviewees , especially stakeholders who were aware of project trajectories, combined with increased desk review effort

2.4 Data collection and analysis

This evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the evaluation questions. The main data collection methods are presented below:

- **Desk review and structured analysis** of key documents related to the Strategic Note.³⁴
- **Semi-structured interviews** with 9 current and former UN Women personnel and 21 key partners.
- **Focus groups with 88 stakeholders and beneficiaries through 22 sessions** (UN Women personnel, CSOs involved in Strategic Note implementation, women who have attended UN Women capacity development activities, direct beneficiaries of UN Women interventions, members of the Civil Society Advisory Group, partners from the private sector and governmental stakeholders).
- **Surveys were administered online and applied to four groups:** UN Women personnel (39 respondents with a response rate of 57 per cent); UN Women stakeholders including civil society, United Nations and government partners (63 respondents with a response rate of 27 per cent)³⁵ as well as two surveys applied in coordination with One Win Leads to Another project staff (5 members of the Collective Impact Coalition and 25 persons from trained CSOs).
- **Case study for an in-depth look into a selected project** based on the aforementioned sampling criteria to provide an opportunity for deeper learning (see [Annex 6.1](#) for case study report including detailed methodology). The case study focused on the One Win Leads to Another project, which was agreed with the donor to be part of this broader portfolio evaluation.

Data analysis used content analysis for the qualitative data collected, and descriptive statistics. The content analysis was based on the extraction of major and recurrent themes during the interviews and drew out key trends based upon the preponderance of available evidence. Descriptive statistics was used for the data collected from the four surveys and other financial and quantitative data. This analysis was based on the synthesis made based on frequency, proportion and the salience of responses. In addition, triangulation was used to identify similarities and/or discrepancies in data obtained from other sources including focus groups and secondary data.

The evaluation followed the Ethical Guiding Principles of the United Nations Evaluation Group, including particular consideration of the following: (1) respect for dignity and diversity, (2) right to self-determination, (3) fair representation, (4) ethical protocols for vulnerable groups, (5) redress, (6) confidentiality and (7) avoidance of harm. To operationalize these principles and relevant UN Women policies, a Data Management Plan (see [Annex 6.5](#)) guided the evaluation team on how data were managed and stored, ethical protocols adopted and other relevant areas.

2.5 Governance and quality assurance

UN Women evaluations establish mechanisms to ensure high-quality evaluation processes and products as outlined in the UN Women Evaluation Policy and Handbook. This evaluation exercise was led by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service and an independent evaluation team. The evaluation was subject to quality review by the Director of UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services, the Chief of the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service, a peer reviewer and the Evaluation Reference Group, which is composed of representatives of the UN Women Brazil Country Office, the Government of Brazil, development partners, the UNCT and civil society (see [Annex 6.3](#)).

³⁴ In addition to extracting data from UN Women management systems, the team partnered with UN Global Pulse to extract data on the social media activity of the Country Office through the CrowdTangle platform.

³⁵ Both the UN Women personnel and stakeholder surveys included questions that are common across other UN Women CPEs to facilitate benchmarking.

FIGURE 4. The evaluation approach allowed for consultation with 250 internal and external stakeholders through primary methods

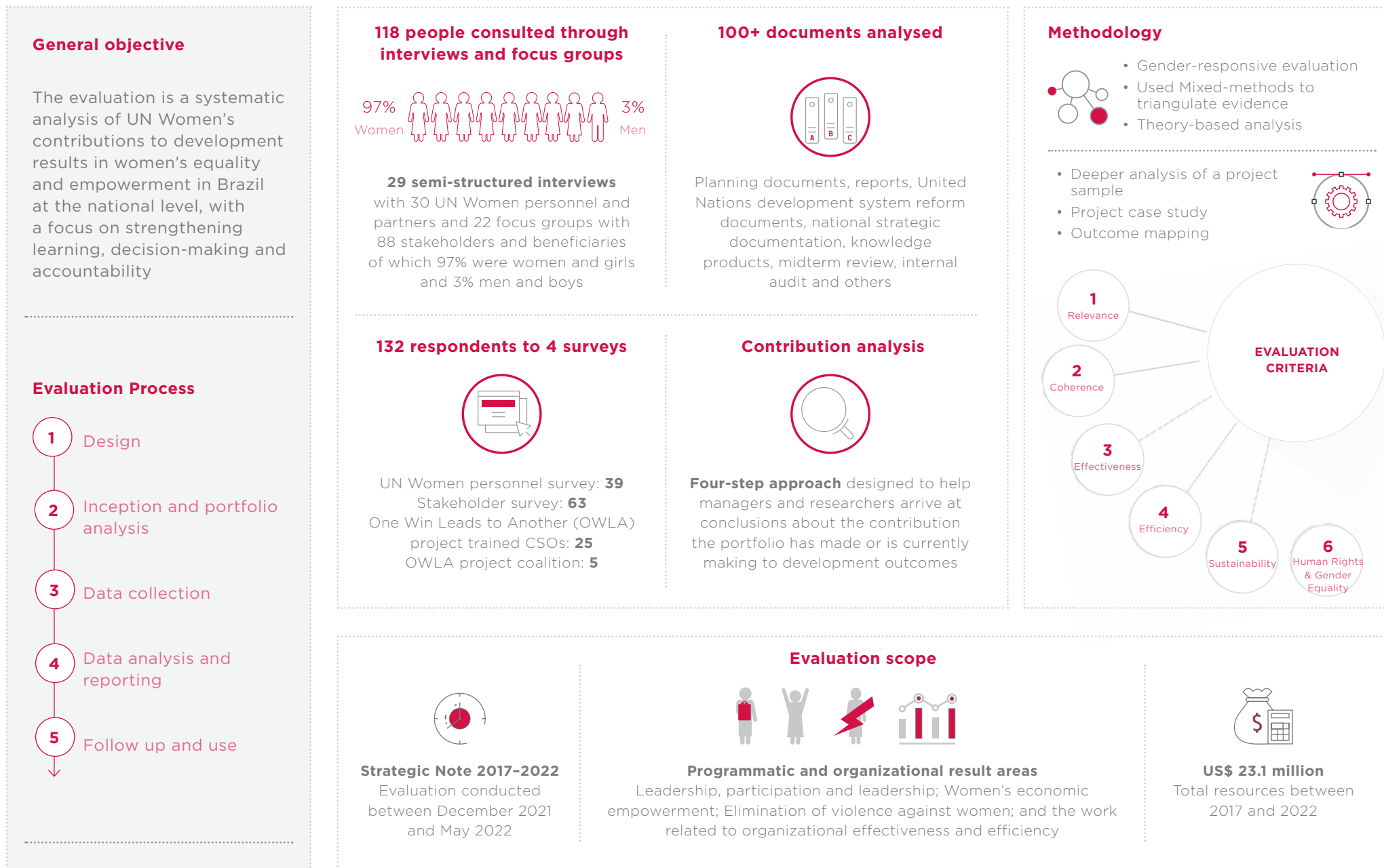




Photo ©UN Women/Bruno Spada

3

Findings

This section presents an assessment of the UN Women country programme in Brazil and is organized by evaluation criteria, recognizing the interrelationship between these areas of measurement.

3.1 RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

Is UN Women's approach, including its thematic focus and strategy for implementation, the most relevant for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Brazil?

FINDING 1

UN Women adapted its approach over the period to increase its support to subnational governments and grass-roots organizations. The Country Office provided a key voice in the gender debate in Brazil through a range of partnerships, and there was notable demand for intensifying collaboration with UN Women at a normative, advocacy and policy debate level.

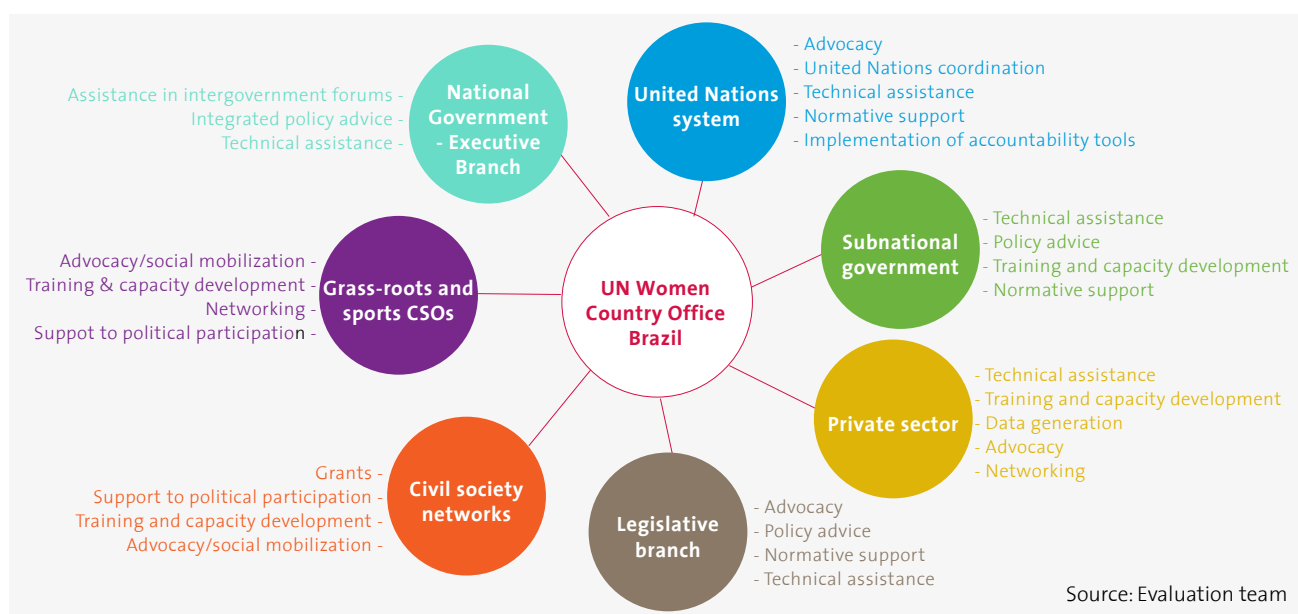
During Strategic Note implementation, UN Women strengthened partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders, including subnational governments, companies and CSOs, and accordingly adapted to changes in the national context (Figure 5). While maintaining alignment with the national development priorities of the Government, the Country Office adjusted its approach and strategy to address newly emerging issues, priorities and opportunities, such as the impacts of the Zika virus, the COVID-19 pandemic and Venezuelan migration. In this context, the office implemented several projects and initiatives providing institutional and capacity development support to particularly affected groups.

In this respect, the Country Office has been particularly responsive to key grass-roots movements in Brazil related to indigenous populations, human rights defenders, domestic workers, Venezuelan migrant and refugee women, women affected by the Zika virus in 2017 and black women.³⁶ UN Women focused on dialogue with and support to nationwide or regional social movement networks as a strategy

to have wide territorial coverage. The office focused on specific movements and CSOs, as evidenced by its support to the National Federation of Domestic Workers (FENATRAD); to the National Association of Ancestral Indigenous Women Warriors (ANMIGA), the first indigenous women's network; and to women human-rights defenders. In addition, support was given to black feminists, including through the project Black Women toward a 50-50 Planet by 2030³⁷, and to *quilombola* women.

With regard to the private sector, UN Women's work and agenda has been relevant in advancing the dialogue around the gender agenda.³⁸ For example, as a result of work on mobilizing companies to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles, companies became more engaged in key gender agenda issues. UN Women helped to set the contents of the agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in many of the participating companies through events and various debates (see further results of the Win-Win: Gender Equality Means Good Business project under section 3.2, Effectiveness).

FIGURE 5. UN Women worked through various functions and modalities with a range of stakeholders³⁹



³⁶ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual reports, 2017–2021.

³⁷ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2018.

³⁸ Focus group discussions.

³⁹ Such modalities and functions include normative support, policy advice, data generation, capacity development and training, technical assistance, advocacy and social mobilization, direct support and service delivery, and United Nations system coordination.

During Strategic Note implementation, UN Women also expanded outreach through project interventions and other activities at sub-regional and municipal levels. The strategy allowed UN Women to play an important role in helping to give voice to excluded women's groups, but also raised questions about the capacity of UN Women to deliver at local level. Consultations indicated that the Country Office had limited capacity to manage multiple channels of dialogue with organizations in the face of high expectations about UN Women's potential support.⁴⁰ This was noted in the terms of office engagement with forums installed by UN Women such as the Civil Society Advisory Group and committee of the project Black Women toward a 50-50 Planet by 2030. As more focus was given to local implementation, the evaluation identified that there was a demand from key actors to have UN Women play a more prominent role under its normative mandate, thereby also enhancing its ability to build bridges between civil society and state institutions.

There were examples of normative work at the national level (e.g., support to the legislative and judiciary branches in dialogue on Law No. 9,504/97 and 23,575/2018 resolution)⁴¹ in the period, but a stronger emphasis was identified on its operational mandate, especially during and after COVID-19. Accordingly, engagement and alignment with the national Government was visible in certain areas of convergence – such as participation in the Commission on the Status of Women as well as partnership with the Ministry of Citizenship, SNPM and ABC – which translated into projects implemented with the national Government.⁴²

Economic empowerment was one area of particular convergence between UN Women work and the priorities of the national Government.⁴³

UN Women was seen as a relevant partner that was able to promote debate on pressing issues and bring insight on gender equality and women's empowerment based on a well-informed international perspective. In the words of a civil society partner:

“UN Women has a very important role in Brazil...They are very capable, always willing to exchange ideas.”

– Head of a CSO

The majority of partners appreciated the approach of UN Women. Most surveyed stakeholders were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the engagement of UN Women with the most marginalized (46 of 62 respondents or 74 per cent) and with its alignment with the most pressing needs of the target population (53 of 63 respondents or 84 per cent). Self-assessment by UN Women of these areas was also generally positive, although fewer personnel were satisfied with engagement with the most marginalized populations (see more detailed discussion in section 3.4, Sustainability, gender equality and human rights).

BOX 1. UN Women's normative mandate

Globally, UN Women's normative support can be understood as providing technical and policy advisory support to inform: standard-setting and gender mainstreaming; the production of evidence and knowledge to support the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda and relevant Security Council resolutions of the women, peace and security agenda; and other global intergovernmental normative and policy outcomes. It also includes the facilitation of dialogue among different stakeholders. (Source: UN Women Strategic Plan 2022–2025, UNW/2021/6)

In Brazil, UN Women has operationalized its normative mandate through technical assistance to national, state and municipal authorities to build their capacity to translate to the national context and implement global norms to which the country is signatory. Moreover, it comprehends the support to or the conduct of studies and research that generate evidence to foster local policymaking, planning and budgeting to support compliance with the international norms and standards. At the community level, this includes the awareness-raising and capacity building of right holders to fulfil their rights in line with global norms and standards.

⁴⁰ See <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/084/17/PDF/N1508417.pdf?OpenElement>.

⁴¹ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2018, and interviews.

⁴² UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual reports, 2018 and 2019, interviews.

⁴³ Government of Brazil, Pluriannual Plan Participativo 2020–2023. There was also a plan covering 2016–2019 and another covering 2020–2023.

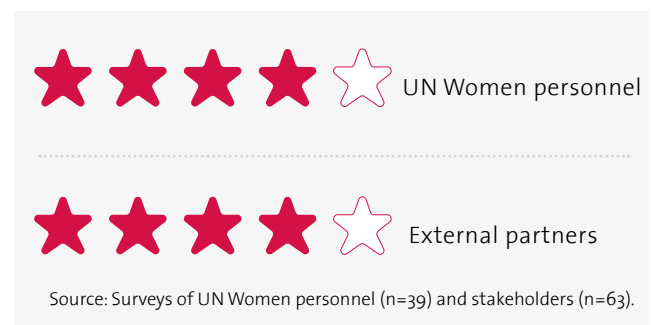
FINDING 2

UN Women was largely able to adapt and maintain relevance in the face of COVID-19, including through employing modalities such as small grants and food cards along with virtual activities. Some dialogues and field projects nonetheless lost traction in the context of the pandemic.

COVID-19 posed unprecedented challenges to the Country Office, particularly given the gravity of the pandemic in the country, requiring the adaptation of programme implementation. Stakeholders and UN Women personnel assessed the office as responding well to this changing context; on average, both surveyed groups rated the Country Office highly in effectively adapting to the changing context (Figure 6). Such adaptation was demonstrated through the shift to online activities (e.g., training for projects such as Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) for migrant, asylum seeker and refugee women in Brazil; Connecting Women, Defending Rights; and One Win Leads to Another; as well as in-country, regional and international dialogues and training as part of the Win-Win project); the provision of small grants/food cards to groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination who were disproportionately affected by the pandemic (women human-rights defenders, domestic workers through FENATRAD, girls from marginalized communities of Rio de Janeiro in *favelas*, as well as indigenous women from Amazonas, Maranhão, Rondônia and Roraima states); and the launch of advocacy public statements during the pandemic. In 2020–2021, UN Women implemented the joint programme Supporting Emergency Measures and Recovery Actions to Tackle COVID-19 in the Indigenous Territories in the Amazon Region, with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In addition, during the pandemic, small grants contributed to the institutional sustainability of some CSOs and their field activities. Most small grants (12 of 17) provided during the period contributed to the local response to COVID-19 and were linked to domestic workers unions, indigenous peoples and *quilombola*, and other communities. This support provided resources and

tools for local food security, community-based mobilization and health emergency plans for populations spread throughout the Brazilian territory, such as the states of Amazonas, Pernambuco, Rio de Janeiro, Roraima and Sergipe.

FIGURE 6 Internal and external stakeholders found a high level of adaptation to the evolving programmatic context⁴⁴



There was nonetheless a demobilization of many partnerships with companies, particularly at the end of the Win-Win project in August 2021, as well as with the parliament, the judiciary and the governments of Roraima and Itabira, and a distancing from field activities. The focus groups noted discontinuation in the dialogue with the companies, and the relationship with the legislative and judiciary branches also decreased particularly as a result of the pandemic and political changes, although some relevant activities were implemented during this period.⁴⁵ In the case of Itabira and Roraima, UN Women staff left the field following the establishment of safety protocols. In both cases, project implementation was carried out remotely by UN Women personnel, which hindered implementation. In Itabira, an additional challenge was the political transition between local governments after the 2020 elections.

⁴⁴ Survey question: Please assess the extent to which UN Women has effectively adapted its programme of work to the changing context in the country, including to COVID-19.

⁴⁵ The Country Office reported carrying out meetings with parliamentarians and supported event invitations during this period, which was the case of the relationship with the Women's Political Observatory of the Chamber of Deputies on Political Violence Against Women as well as participation in a Women's Secretary of National Congress working group on the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women.

To what extent have interventions achieved internal and external coherence, including within the UN Women portfolio and vis-à-vis the United Nations Country Team's work?

FINDING 3

UN Women demonstrated a highly relevant role within the UNCT through its leadership on coordinating gender equality efforts, including for joint inter-agency programming, thematic groups, normative and advocacy work. The United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity in Brazil, led by UN Women, enhanced its management over time with a structured approach to deliver policy guidelines and tools related to the United Nations development system reform. The opportunity to ensure a broader inclusion of themes and agendas in inter-agency work and fine-tune dialogue on the gender agenda was equally underlined by key partners.

In alignment with UN Women's mandate to lead, promote and coordinate efforts to promote gender equality and the full realization of women's human rights, the Country Office promoted the gender responsiveness of various joint United Nations programmes, campaigns and initiatives. At the programmatic level, UN Women led gender-focused joint programmes such as LEAP and supported mainstreaming of gender equality in other joint programmes led by other agencies, such as Happy Child and Supporting Emergency Measures and Recovery Actions to Tackle COVID-19 in the Indigenous Territories in the Amazon Region. UN Women equally led or contributed to advocacy and campaigns on gender equality and women's rights with partners, such as the United Nations Secretary General's campaign UNITE to End Violence against Women, Free and Equal, and Vidas Negras. The Country Office helped to create synergies by integrating gender–race–ethnicity intersectionality into campaigns, such as the International Decade for People of African Descent, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to Black Women (e.g., Planet 50-50 platform),⁴⁶ as well as by providing assistance to indigenous women and joint programmes (e.g., Multi-Partner Trust Fund COVID-19 initiative). The Country Office has also more recently played a relevant role in promoting a gendered intersectional approach to the UNCT strategic planning process for the next United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, including through the Common Country Analysis and the final evaluation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework 2017–2022.

Overall, surveyed external stakeholders nearly unanimously agreed or fully agreed that UN Women was a strong advocate for gender equality and women's empowerment (95 per cent).

Regarding UN Women's role at the UNCT, surveyed partners reported that UN Women was effective in accountability on gender mainstreaming, as evidenced by the integration of a race perspective into the UNCT–SWAP scorecard.⁴⁷ Interviewed stakeholders recognized this as a strong practice with potential to be replicated in other comparable contexts.⁴⁸ In this sense, the experience has gained international recognition: the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity obtained three seats to participate in the United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and Minorities, and the Deputy Representative of the Country Office was awarded by UN Women for recognizing the combination of race and gender in the methodology of the scorecard, assessing relevant UNCT capacity and providing concrete recommendations to address gaps in UNCT efforts to eliminate gendered racism in its programming.⁴⁹

Additionally, stakeholders have reported that the work of the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity evolved to operate in a well-structured manner under UN Women's capable leadership, including through its approach to planning, regular meetings and more systematic monitoring. In this respect, the group has been facilitating tracking of implementation of UNCT–SWAP in coordination with partners.

⁴⁶ In the scope of the International Decade for People of African Descent, e.g., the Country Office led the organization of webinars, workshops on human rights of people of African descent and technical meetings, among other activities.

⁴⁷ UNCT–SWAP Gender and Race Equality Scorecard, United Nations Country Team Brazil. Facilitators: Ana Landa Ugarte and Bruna Cristina Jaquetto Pereira, 9 December 2020.

⁴⁸ Note that UN Women has been collaborating with the UNCT on intersectionality of gender and race since the adoption of the UNCT plan of action on the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015), prior to the Strategic Note. Accordingly, the adaptation of the methodology was an important continuation of such efforts to integrate a racial perspective into accountability frameworks on gender.

⁴⁹ UN Women, Winners of the Peg Snyder and Team Excellence Awards, April 2021.

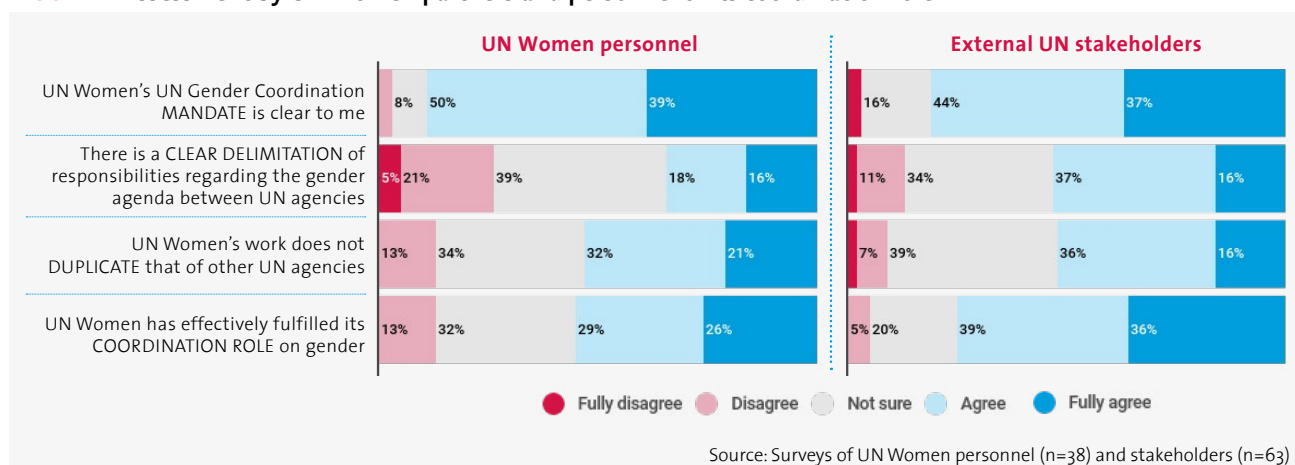
This resulted in a work plan that was well evaluated by partners for its ability to align activities and indicators with corporate tools. These various areas of work underlined the value added of UN Women as a gender equality knowledge hub. There was equally wide recognition from United Nations partners, CSOs and government representatives about the quality of Country Office expertise in producing technical notes, publications and training and adjusting project design.

An evolving organizational context also presented the opportunity to further adapt its work in this area given an increasingly gender-responsive United Nations system in Brazil. Reported progress by partners in mainstreaming gender represented an important step towards the fulfilment of United Nations entity commitments to gender equality,⁵⁰ while also underlining the need for increased UN Women capacity to coordinate efforts within the system. Although the mandate of UN Women within the gender agenda was relatively clear for surveyed stakeholders (Figure 7), there was scope for addressing a perceived overlap and lack of clarity of responsibilities in coordination with partners in the context of the United Nations development system reform. Furthermore, some consulted stakeholders indicated a demand for enhanced dialogue among United Nations partners to include different perspectives and agendas more holistically and to foster inter-agency programming on gender equality and women's empowerment. Interviews with partners of the Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Ethnicity and Race indicated that some agencies found that their agenda on gender was not sufficiently considered, and there was a shared perspective among several stakeholders of a need for more flexibility. This was also evidenced in the survey, where a smaller proportion of respondents (38 per cent) found the conceptualization and

implementation of joint programmes and the mobilization around the gender agenda very effective. There were relevant opportunities for inter-agency cooperation in areas and contexts where UN Women's coordination mandate is perceived by partners as a key technical input for the integration of intersectional gender perspectives, as was the case with humanitarian assistance to the mixed flow of migrants and refugees from Venezuela, as well as the growing connection between environmental issues and traditional communities. However, the context of United Nations reform and the elaboration of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework offered opportunities for more integrated inter-agency work, such as the increased volume of technical input for joint work between the agencies and the constitution of a UNCT governance architecture under the new cooperation framework.

In this context, given UN Women's recognized technical expertise, knowledge products and capacity, the Country Office was well positioned to promote compliance with the gender equality and women's empowerment global norms of United Nations joint work. With limited resources, finding the right niche within a broad agenda was seen as key for UN Women to work in the coming years to maintain its relevant contribution. The strong strategic position of the Country Office on the UNCT in order to fulfil its coordination mandate and to incorporate gender and race perspectives into United Nations programming is widely recognized by partners. To create synergy among the work of the various agencies in line with system-wide organizational mandates in this area, sustained efforts from UN Women will help to overcome the array of external and internal factors hindering stronger inter-agency cooperation.⁵¹

FIGURE 7 Assessment by UN Women partners and personnel of its coordination role⁵²



⁵⁰ See, e.g., the related mandates of the United Nations development system reform, the United Nations System-wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and the United Nations Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions/1997.

⁵¹ The Chief Executive Board statement from 2006/2 calls for coherence and coordination of efforts in the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy towards the achievement of the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the United Nations system (f).

⁵² Survey question: Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding UN Women's coordination role.

FINDING 4

UN Women’s work aligned well with the international agenda, and there was internal coherence among the different thematic areas. However, the Country Office faced challenges to maintain coherence given the multitude of initiatives led by changing internal focal points. There was also a challenge in aligning projects with the higher level outcome of each portfolio area.

There was clear programmatic coherence of the UN Women agenda in Brazil in relation to the overall UN Women mandate and international agenda.⁵³ The global agenda of UN Women has been relatively consistent over the period of implementation, in which women’s empowerment is based on the pillars of changing norms, increasing political participation, equal access to the labour market and prevention of violence in all its forms. In this sense, from the perspective of Country Office outcomes, the Strategic Note follows the corporate focus. In addition, the Strategic Note was aligned with three Global Flagship Programmes: Prevention and Access to Essential Services to End Violence against Women; Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Crisis Response; and Equal Opportunities to Women Entrepreneurs (affirmative procurement, investment and supply chain process).

The initiatives in the different thematic portfolio areas also demonstrated internal coherence and connectivity. For example, the project One Win Leads to Another fell under the Ending Violence against Women and Girls thematic area formally, but its curriculum developed for girls touched upon multiple thematic areas. The Win-Win joint programme addressed not only women’s economic empowerment, but also promoted leadership and addressed violence against women in the workplace. The joint programme LEAP equally covered multiple thematic areas, and the joint programme Happy Child focused on care work but also addressed violence against women. Dialogue with the parliament, coordinated by the Governance and Participation team of the Country Office, also related to the thematic area of Ending Violence against Women and Girls. The South–South Cooperation project, supported by the ABC, which has worked in Mozambique, dealt with women’s empowerment in various sectors. There was flexibility in engaging each portfolio’s work with the broader debate and agenda on gender.

Moreover, grants given to women human-rights defenders (Connecting Women, Defending Rights) were managed under the Ending Violence against Women and Girls thematic area, but also aimed to encourage political participation and boost economic empowerment. Support to the FENATRAD labour movement of domestic workers was managed under the Women’s Economic Empowerment thematic area and resulted in increased availability of

qualified information for domestic workers, such as labour calculations and how to access decent work, and in the strengthening of FENATRAD institutional capacities to promote decent work and participate in decision-making processes, which also contributed to advancing the governance and participation agenda. The advocacy and communication campaigns also tend to be cross-cutting. There are specific campaigns for preventing violence, but at the same time, the HeForShe campaign, among others, is related to women’s empowerment in a broader sense. HeForShe falls under the Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness Framework (OEEF) and therefore has a broader scope. Along the same lines, the UNITE campaign, which UN Women conceptualized and led in 2020, focused on the intersectionality of women’s human rights and the principle of leaving no one behind.

Despite these strong linkages, one of the key ongoing challenges of internal coherence was continuity. As staff turnover was high (see more discussion under section 3.3, Efficiency) and the Country Office receives many demands and engages in diversified activities, there was inconsistency of actions over the years (annual reports 2017–2021). A very interesting opportunity and new engagement may be reported in one year and be completely off the agenda in the following year. In fact, one key partner has suggested that projects in UN Women should have a clearer framework of “start, implementation, closure and follow-up”. This framework was very clear for projects with donor resources attached and mandatory reporting. However, there was a problem of consistency and results over time for actions with no clear resources attached that are agreed on the basis of individual political will. This lack of continuity was reported by various relevant Country Office partners and compromises internal coherence.⁵⁴ In addition, in the Ending Violence against Women and Girls thematic area, coherence suffered as a result of the absence of a portfolio manager for one out of the five years under analysis. Moreover, there were limitations in the portfolio manager’s role being fulfilled to provide a strategic perspective for the thematic area and help the different actions engage and contribute to the higher level outcome of the area, which did not happen in the case of the Ending Violence against Women and Girls impact area.

⁵³ UN Women Brazil Strategic Note; CPE Brazil Inception Report.

⁵⁴ The Country Office had many isolated, small-scale interventions as opposed to synergetic scale-up initiatives, as equally noted by the 2019 audit, affecting the feasibility of managing multiple small-scale projects and initiatives. UN Women, Independent Evaluation and Audit Services, Country Office Audit: UN Women Country Office in Brazil, IEAS/IAS/2019/012, 5 February 2020.

3.2 EFFECTIVENESS

What are the results of UN Women's contributions to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in Brazil?

Many of the initiatives of UN Women Brazil are cross-cutting. In this section, programme results are largely presented according to their placement within the three thematically organized impact areas, but intersections with other areas are mentioned whenever appropriate. The analysis considers interventions according to the Gender Effectiveness Scale. Under the Gender Effectiveness Scale, actions are assessed as to whether they were gender negative, gender blind, gender targeted, gender responsive or gender transformative. The Gender at Work Framework is also used at the end of section 3.4 to assess whether actions have helped to provide women with (1) resources, (2) better rules and policies, (3) changes in social norms and deep structure or (4) consciousness and capabilities.

FINDING 5

In the Governance and Political Participation impact area, UN Women contributed to increasing the political participation of women facing multiple forms of discrimination and reinforcing the implementation of electoral legislation for women. Work in this area was mostly gender transformative, by touching upon deeper drivers of women's empowerment, including policies and norms. However, there was an unmet demand from key stakeholders in the country to increase and sustain dialogue with UN Women over time, and its contribution was more limited during the pandemic from 2020 onward.

Interventions of UN Women in the area of governance and participation were shaped by the new priorities of the national Government. As a result, key contributions in this area were observable in informing legislative debate and at a grass-roots level more than upstream public policy. In this Strategic Note, indigenous women and black women movements were identified as notable groups to be empowered to influence politics. While most targets in this thematic area were met or exceeded (see [Annex 6.15](#), Table 6.15.1), in general they were not representative of UN Women's contribution, nor were they useful for monitoring or accurately depicting the influence of the Country Office. For example, the target related to the percentage of women elected to the lower house represented figures attained at the beginning of the Strategic Note period in 2018 (Indicator 1.1G). These data are captured once every election cycle, and accordingly the target achievement was unlikely to demonstrate the potential impact of the Country Office during the entire implementation period.

BOX 2. Testing theory of change assumptions

UN Women provided grass-roots movements with relevant opportunities to develop capacity, as per the Country Office strategy of **increasing political participation through targeted capacity development**. More women were elected and more minorities were climbing the power ladder. However, there were missed opportunities to provide women with timely training so that knowledge gained could be used in a more effective way. The change pathway between provision and use of knowledge to gain access to power was still not fully clear, in part because of monitoring gaps.

At the grass-roots level, UN Women contributed to the creation of the ANMIGA indigenous women's network and to the organization of the first and second Indigenous Women National Marches in 2019 and 2021.⁵⁵ This is part of an ongoing process that will take time to mature, although there has already been some progress. In 2018, the first indigenous woman was elected to National Congress. She was from Roraima State in the Amazon.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2021, and focus group discussions.

⁵⁶ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2018.

UN Women was a bridge builder to indigenous women, putting them in contact with other international institutions. Another important step was taken in 2021 with the implementation of the project Human Rights of Indigenous and Quilombola Women: A Governance Matter, supported by the Norwegian Government. The project aims to promote the rights of indigenous and *quilombola* women in Brazil and is being implemented in the border states of Maranhão and Pará with both indigenous and *quilombola* communities living in forest and urban areas.

In addition, UN Women has facilitated the participation of black and indigenous women at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and other intergovernmental meetings. One key result of this work was the inclusion of a specific paragraph on Afrodescendant women in the CSW agreed conclusion for the first time. This was done through capacity development with black women and engagement with the Brazilian Government. The contribution of UN Women to the black women's movement in Brazil was notable in opening space for dialogue and building confidence of leaders for a greater sense of empowerment in key forums, as reported by black women leaders consulted by the evaluation team. On the assumption that politics is about power and voice, UN Women contributed to the creation of space to historically excluded groups in the country. Of the 13 women parliamentarians who are Afro-Brazilians, per the 2018 election results, one joined the UN Women Brazil 50-50 Platform during her campaign, expressing her engagement for parity democracy.⁵⁷

In this front, UN Women has also promoted an online course for women candidates. A total of 452 participants attended the course, of which 5 per cent formalized their candidacies and none were elected. Interviewees shared their perspectives on the high quality of the course and expressed their appreciation. However, there was also concern that these types of courses needed to be planned well in advance of the electoral period. In one particular case, UN Women promoted the course very close to the elections, and most women who were running were too busy campaigning to attend. This shows that there is potential for the content to be better used through more effective planning that takes into account the electoral calendar. Indeed, as a first approach to the training of women candidates, the courses promoted by UN Women in 2020 also served as a technical basis for future interventions. It is important to note that in addition to the lack of training, other relevant challenges, such as lack of campaign financing, political violence and lack of party support, hinder the election of women candidates.

From an electoral point of view, in the 2018 elections, women represented 15 per cent of the parliamentarians elected to the lower house of the National Congress. The results shifted Brazil from position 153 to 131 on the International Parliamentary Union ranking of women representation in parliaments – including the lower house and the upper house. Some progress is verified, considering that only 51 women were elected to the lower house (9.9 per cent) in the 2014 elections. Of course, this is an impact level indicator that cannot be attributed to UN Women alone, although it is important to note that the Country Office maintained a close dialogue with the Superior Electoral Court, the main partner regarding electoral rules in Brazil. In addition, UN Women promoted events with the National Congress, such as the panel Women Participation in Decision Making Spaces as well as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence agenda.⁵⁸

In the period of the Strategic Note, four bills that would have introduced new obstacles to political women's participation were rejected by the parliament: Constitutional Amendment n. 125/2011, Constitutional Amendment n. 18/2021, Bill n. 1951/2021 and Bill n. 112/2021. These would have resulted in setbacks for women's political participation, such as the return of party coalitions and the change from the proportional political system to the district system (single non-transferable vote), and the 15 per cent of seats reserved for women. In the debate of these bills, the Country Office, in collaboration with UN Women headquarters, the UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean and the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, provided evidence that helped to inform the debate. The Country Office issued briefing notes on Temporary Special Measures in Brazil,⁵⁹ on false candidatures (with the Superior Electoral Court and the University of Brasília), on Constitutional Amendment Proposals 134 and 181 (with UNFPA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) and on the Maria da Penha Law.⁶⁰

BOX 3. Testing theory of change assumptions

The Country Office strategy assumed that **research would be used to promote gender equity, leading to concrete follow-up actions** if the research was solid and well disseminated. There was evidence that UN Women provided legislative actors with relevant knowledge and technical input to help the Government participate in international political forums and implement electoral legislation for women. This was identified as an area of particular value added of UN Women. Stakeholders reported that UN Women brings an international perspective, which was very valuable to help define the agenda and think creatively about women's empowerment.

⁵⁷ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2018.

⁵⁸ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2017.

⁵⁹ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2021.

⁶⁰ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2017.

In this respect, the Country Office has developed dialogue with the legislative and judiciary branches, which contributed to normative gains for women candidates in elections. In this respect, UN Women supported the Women's Secretary of the National Congress in its dialogue with the Supreme Federal Court, which contributed to the issuance of two positive decisions. Based on these decisions, the Superior Electoral Court issued the 23,575/2018 resolution, which guarantees funds for women candidates in proportion to their number. A Gender Commission in the Superior Electoral Court was created with the assistance of UN Women in 2019. The contribution of UN Women, acknowledged by partners, also helped in the revision of law n. 9.504/97, which established rules for elections and set mandatory percentages for female and male candidates of at least 30 per cent for the 2020 elections.

In addition, UN Women was part of the Council of the Women's Political Observatory of the Chamber of Deputies, and it played a relevant role in providing informational material on political violence against women, which resulted on the creation of a group to discuss this issue. However, key stakeholders would have appreciated greater engagement from UN Women in this legislative debate. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic there was less engagement and, as interviewees reported, there was a lack of technical assistance for debate on themes such as violence against women and other issues related to women in the country. While this demonstrated a demand for new ideas and debate to which UN Women could contribute, it also highlighted areas of missed opportunity in the timely provision of technical input, issue briefs and tools.

Several relevant UN Women knowledge products were identified in the period of the Strategic Note, including briefing notes on COVID-19 for various marginalized groups, an adapted version of the publication *Preventing Violence Against Women During Elections: A Programming Guide*, a study on women's political participation in Brazil, a booklet on violence against women in politics, and

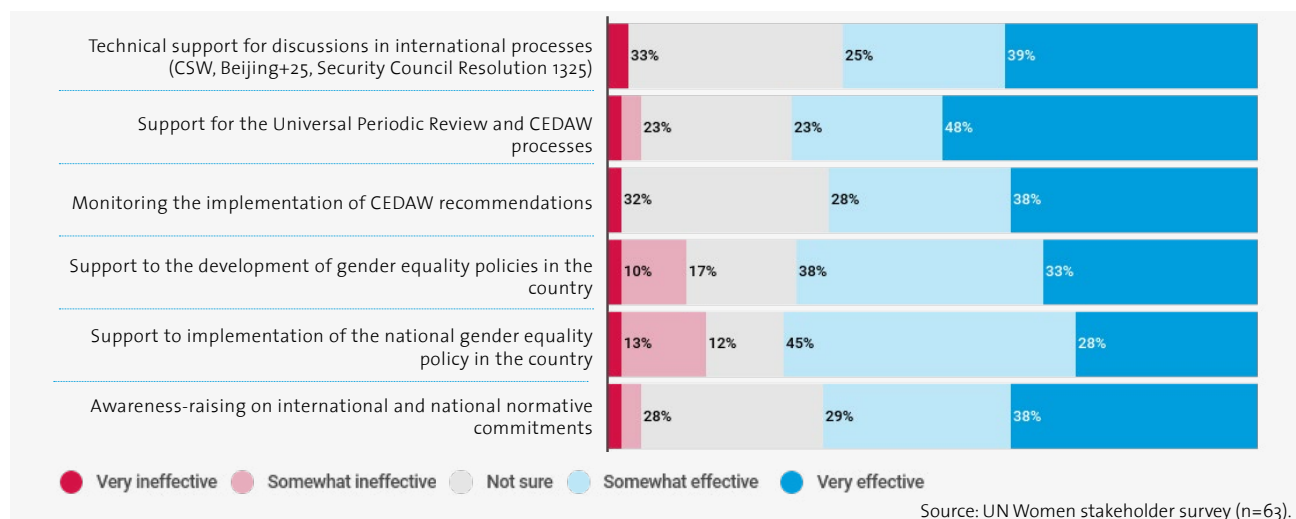
an assessment of women's economic empowerment in Itabira Municipality. Various partners noted that these knowledge products served as a reference for women's equality in the country. They are useful and appreciated by stakeholders, although the timeliness was an issue, as reported by partners.

In addition, UN Women Brazil engaged in the regional project ATENEA, which helps to map and identify entry points for fostering women's political participation.⁶¹ In the case of Brazil, an initial mapping of the status of country was done and the Political Parity Index was developed in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and research institutions. There may be opportunity for future engagement in this area, as there is limited follow-up and monitoring of electoral legislation. Quotas and resources for women may not be allocated without proper monitoring of the implementation of these policies.

The Country Office provided key support to the Brazilian Government in preparation for key meetings and forums, such as: the Commission on the Status of Women 61 and its regional preparatory meeting; the tenth Meeting of Ministers of Women's Affairs of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR); and the fifth Meeting of Ministers of Women's Affairs of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries. The latter meeting drafted a plan of action for the 2016–2018 biennium, and led to the signing of a memorandum of understanding between UN Women and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.⁶² High-level dialogue has been maintained and support given to help the Government engage in global debates.

Surveyed partners assessed UN Women's contribution in its normative role most positively regarding its support for the Universal Periodic Review and CEDAW (Figure 8). The two lowest areas of assessment related to domestic policy – support to the development and implementation of gender equality policies in the country – which was coherent with the opportunities presented in the period.

FIGURE 8 Assessment of UN Women's normative role by partners



⁶¹ <https://americatlatinagenera.org/atenea/>.

⁶² UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2017.

BOX 4. Testing theory of change assumptions

There was mixed evidence on how UN Women's campaigns on political participation fostered governmental and individual engagement in line with the related assumption of the Country Office strategy to **leverage online platforms for effective results**.

The Country Office strategy also assumed that **capacity developed by government institutions would lead to the promotion of gender equality**, but there was insufficient evidence to test the assumption given the limited capacity at governmental level in this impact area.

While key stakeholders subscribed to the Brazil 50-50 Strategy, which aimed to increase the visibility of the importance of the promotion of parity democracy through a national public opinion poll, two international seminars and a platform to commit candidates with public policies for women and an observatory,⁶³ other stakeholders reported that it was not effective. The Country Office engaged in other online platforms, web pages and campaigns but did not demonstrate consistently a capacity to keep them operational and leverage their potential. Examples of this included the UNA Platform, which was supported by the private sector and had very low activity. UN Women accepted to host the platform if additional resources for its management were mobilized, and this did not happen.⁶⁴

Under the Governance and Participation thematic area, another key initiative was the project targeted in the Itabira Municipality of Minas Gerais State.

UN Women was approached by the municipality to help mainstream gender at a local level, and an ambitious plan was designed involving political mobilization from various sectors in the context of localizing the SDGs. The project was able to deliver training to local teachers through the initiative Brave Is Not Violent. The teachers appreciated the training, which brought awareness to the school system at the local level. However, with the change in government and the context of the pandemic, the project was not able to deliver most of what was initially planned and had shown limited communication impact, although its final report is yet to be delivered. This initiative, which was unique, brought important lessons that will be further discussed under lessons learned on how projects of this kind can be better sustained over time.

The portfolio implemented mostly gender transformative initiatives dealing with power relations (e.g., fostering direct participation of women in general and of **women facing multiple forms of discrimination**) and touched upon policies and norms in the promotion of protective legislation for women. Political participation is one of the central areas for decreasing society's power imbalances between women and men. However, there was little engagement with male politicians who support parity democracy. If a more equal society is based on a mutually built pact between women and men, Country Office consideration of men as allies in the journey towards gender equality could be more explicitly targeted in this impact area.

FINDING 6

Under the Women's Economic Empowerment area, UN Women promoted an environment of corporate culture in Brazil that was more encouraging to the participation of women in leadership positions and diversity. Important training opportunities were provided to women facing multiple forms of discrimination, but there was limited evidence on how effective they were in promoting income generation. These contributions were gender-responsive and contributed to give women more access to resources.

The area of Women's Economic Empowerment engaged intensely with the private sector between 2018 and 2021 to effectively promote awareness of the need for gender policies. There was a considerable contribution in tandem with companies in designing gender equality action plans, and higher level outcome indicators of the Strategic Note showed progress despite the economic crisis in Brazil. The Country Office was selected by the European Commission to coordinate the regional project Win-Win: Gender

Equality Means Good Business, and the Women's Economic Empowerment team received an honourable mention in the UN Women Team Excellence Award 2018. There was evidence of a substantive contribution for women to take part in training and dialogue, including related to decent work, although more limited progress was identified in the area of promotion of policies for social protection (see [Annex 6.15](#), Table 6.15.2).

⁶³ UN Women Brazil Country Office, annual report, 2019.

⁶⁴ Similarly, in the Ending Violence against Women and Girls thematic area, the One Win Leads to Another web page had rich content but demanded significant effort to be updated, with no capacity in place to perform such functions.

The most significant initiative and result under Women's Economic Empowerment was the Win-Win project, which had a budget of €10.08 million financed by the European Union (2018–2021).⁶⁵ The project, which was led by UN Women in Brazil and implemented jointly with the International Labour Organization (ILO), aimed at expanding cooperation between women-led companies in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean; developing a sustainable model of private sector participation with a gender perspective; and promoting innovation and business ventures led by women. Key results included the mobilization of the private sector to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles, to promote gender-sensitive procurement and to conduct training to develop women's business skills.⁶⁶

The complexity of the project posed various implementation challenges, including a six-country portfolio at the regional level that was implemented with various partners. According to the project-level evaluation, Win-Win initially lacked a solid inception phase, and most of the team changed during implementation of the project. In the case of the Brazil Country Office, the Win-Win project helped to mobilize key companies in the country, which further assisted the office with various initiatives such as the HeForShe campaign and the UNA Platform, which displayed initiatives for women. In addition, the office helped to share experiences and foster work on the Women's Empowerment Principles in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, particularly in Win-Win countries, thus promoting South–South cooperation and helping to create an enabling environment for gender equality in the private sector (e.g., Uruguay).

BOX 5 Results, lessons and good practices of the Win-Win project



Highlighted results

- **30,000+ participations** registered in events
- **400+ knowledge products** developed
- **7,759 companies** accessed knowledge/tools by participating in events
- Generation of strengthened individual, cultural, normative and institutional changes that favour non-discriminatory practices and gender equality
- Boosted ongoing processes and enabling conditions for women's economic empowerment in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Good practices

- Evidenced-based **studies and data** were important to maintain relevance
- The **sustained approach** of the ILO in working with employers' organizations facilitated institutional and systemic changes
- Involvement of high-level private and public **leadership** had a significant impact on project recognition, and strengthened communication strategy was crucial



Lessons

- Lack of a solid inception phase, and not all indicators were well-defined
- No clear, pre-established and agreed mechanism to leverage cross-fertilization across countries given the regional focus
- Although a private sector-oriented project, the role of the public sector should not be ignored
- In the pandemic context, virtual is here to stay and its advantages were demonstrated

Source: UN Women stakeholder survey (n=63).

⁶⁵ Data collection related to the Win-Win project relied on its midterm and final, and focused on the documented lessons and the legacy of the project.

⁶⁶ UN Women, Final evaluation of the Win-Win project, 2021.

Following finalization of the project, private sector partners and staff made the following observations:

- UN Women was key in the mobilization of the private sector and in bringing the perspective of gender to the attention of managers and focal points for diversity. However, much still needs to be done to help this agenda be truly implemented. In many cases, the gender agenda is restricted to specific sectors within companies or institutes and does not reach company executives, which would lead to the promotion of overall inclusion, gender equality and women's empowerment practices in companies.
- There are expectations from key stakeholders of UN Women to help foster the gender agenda and convene the private sector that are currently not being met. Relationship-building takes time and is based on trust. Many focal points in UN Women have left the organization, and there was a sense of discontinuity from many stakeholders in relation to UN Women.
- Timing in the private sector is fast, and there was a sense from key stakeholders that UN Women was slow in responding and delivering, which led to partnerships that lacked energy and took longer to deliver. For example, agreements with private companies suffered severe delays, and most of the work with private companies was not very active during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Although there are challenges in the relationship between UN Women and the private sector, UN Women brought a quality seal and prestige that was well regarded within the private sector.
- The relationship with the private sector was meant to be mainstreamed within the organization, but there was still a lack of clarity in terms of strategy and distribution of responsibilities within the office in this area.
- Despite challenges in managing the private sector relationship, focus groups, interviews and desk review evidence indicated that UN Women contributed to pushing forward the debate in the sector and to giving strategic guidance to specific companies on gender equality and women's empowerment through technical assistance. The Country Office organized various events and training to promote gender equality in the corporate ecosystem (see box 5, Results, lessons and good practices of the Win-Win project).

BOX 6. Testing theory of change assumptions

This impact area focused on partnerships with the private sector and state governments. Accordingly, a key assumption of the Country Office strategy was that companies would incorporate a gender equality lens. This was validated in part based on evidence that companies partially integrated a gender equality lens, namely through signing the Women's Empowerment Principles. The challenge identified was limited follow-up on the implementation of the principles, indicating a risk of tokenism.

Another key component of this portfolio area was the economic empowerment of refugees and migrant women. The joint programme LEAP was funded by the Government of Luxembourg with a combined budget of €1.05 million,⁶⁷ and implemented in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNFPA, Instituto Migrações e Direitos Humanos and Instituto de Estudos Socioeconômicos. As a result of the project, 33,072 refugee and migrant women had access to protection and support mechanisms; 5,508 refugee and migrant women had increased access to economic empowerment, opportunities and rights; and 2,744 migrant, asylum seeker, refugee and host women had increased capacities and opportunities to engage with actors to shape their humanitarian response (assessment, planning, implementation).⁶⁸

Although the project focused on the economic empowerment of Venezuelan women, UN Women's contribution intended to bring a gender perspective to the humanitarian work of the United Nations. The Country Office achieved the following results with this contribution: sex- and age-disaggregated data is now mandatory for R4V partners, and R4V sectors have included women's and girls' priority needs and targeted strategies to address gender gaps. The training provided was of good quality according to stakeholders, although it lacked input to help businesses be developed, and not all women had access to the cash grants. For example, in one case there was a workshop on how to make soap, but the raw material was very expensive for most women, so the knowledge could not be used. On the other hand, the promotion of the courses helped Venezuelan women develop a network of mutual support, as indicated by one partner regarding the project's benefits:

"It was more difficult to work during the pandemic, but more beneficial, as women had greater demands and needs."

– Interview with implementing partner

⁶⁷ This project was initially designed to be part of Impact 4 (Humanitarian Action), but was merged with Impact 2 (Women's Economic Empowerment) after the midterm review.

⁶⁸ LEAP project final report (self-reported by Country Office).

Although, the training offered was beneficial, both beneficiaries and partners called for more “comprehensive initiatives,” where courses are complemented with cash support to open businesses and include follow-up on performance after the training is delivered. The project’s theory of change becomes relevant: training needs to be well designed, well targeted and lead to actual results of employability. In this case, training did not follow up on all of the pathways to help women to find work placements. One of the key partners suggested that the course design should consider that not all women have the profile to be entrepreneurs; thus the courses have to be tailored to diverse needs. In addition, there were suggestions that the training should include a communication component, e.g., how to conduct business online, especially considering the current context. Both beneficiaries and implementers have mentioned the need to assist women with children to be able to work, which could include childcare during the course, which is a key component of making the course gender sensitive. One beneficiary also suggested having Venezuelans as trainers in future courses. Data from the semi-structured interviews and focus group show that COVID-19 brought an important impact to the project. The project delivered the training with partners on the ground and the partnership of the local government, and UN Women assisted remotely.

Engagement with the local government was limited in the implementation of the project, which compromised take-up of the results. A relevant suggestion from one of the key actors was to help migrants develop leadership skills to pressure for public policies. The influx of Venezuelan migrants to Brazil is structural, and the initiative had limited dialogue with the broader context as it was seen in other initiatives (see *One Win Leads to Another* case study, [Annex 6.1](#)). There is a sense from different stakeholders that UN Women work with migrants was limited and that local operations may have been too costly for a structure that is already strained.

Another key contribution under Women’s Economic Empowerment was to FENATRAD, the national trade union for domestic workers, who are mostly women. The evaluation found that UN Women was able to provide tailored assistance to this grass-roots movement, which has limited structure. The grant was flexible and adapted to specific needs in the context of the pandemic. In fact, it was a special grant tailored to grass-roots organizations. It is part of a new policy that was being piloted by the Country Office and proved to be relevant and effective. This

shows that even though there may be operational difficulties working with grass-roots movements (see section 3.3, Efficiency), it was possible to tailor assistance in the case of key partners. The key contributions to FENATRAD included the organization of the twelfth National Congress of Domestic Workers, which brought together 109 union leaders from across the country and developed the Plano de Luta, an action plan for 2022. The plan highlights the need to defend labour rights, expand formalization and improve access to healthcare, especially mental health, for domestic workers in Brazil, and outlines practical strategies for achieving these goals. In addition, during the Strategic Note period, one key normative achievement was the ratification of ILO Convention 189 in January 2018. This was the result of a long process in which Brazilian domestic workers played a prominent role. The convention was ratified after a meeting between Brazilian congresswomen and the UN Women Executive Director.

Finally, the area of Women’s Economic Empowerment has helped to promote a gender and race perspective in the capacity development activities of the Happy Child project. As indicated in this evaluation, UN Women expertise is always welcomed as valuable input. In this case, UN Women joined this SDG Fund project along with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UNFPA, UNDP and UNESCO. Happy Child is the largest pre-school project in Latin America, according to UNICEF.

The pandemic moved all training activities online, and UN Women provided assistance to promote training materials to local agents who have the role of visiting families to give parental guidance. The project adapted creatively to the pandemic and spread its training messages through text messages, radio and social media (WhatsApp). The content of the messages and courses was developed, but there is still no information about its use. However, the project supported a public policy, and all material developed will be under the Secretariat of Evaluation and Information Management of the Ministry of Citizenship in their web portal, which should ensure ownership and continuity of work. Additionally, UN Women has remained in contact with the ministry to monitor the number of people taking the training courses in order to ensure sustainability. In summary, the initiatives of this portfolio have been gender responsive (geared towards the needs of women) but not transformative, as a stronger pathway should have been built between access to training and actual employment, income and career improvement.

FINDING 7

In the thematic area of Ending Violence against Women and Girls, UN Women made a relevant contribution to promote a legal and social environment that is more conducive to the protection of women and girls. This was achieved through its policy advice, communication and the education of girls. Results were amenable to gender transformative change and promoted access to resources. However, eliminating violence is a complex problem that needs to consider stronger linkages between training, legal frameworks and the capacity of the state to implement the appropriate measures.

UN Women was able to work for the prevention of violence at different levels, including state governments, the legislative branch, the judiciary, CSOs and individuals, from a normative and operational perspective. A key normative result was the support for state governments to use protocols to investigate femicide. The capacity-building component of the Ending Violence against Women and Girls portfolio was implemented through the training of young girls and boys (Brave Is Not Violent initiative) and women human-rights defenders. While the portfolio did make inroads to engage government at different levels, this was not evidenced in the two main projects of the portfolio area, One Win Leads to Another and Connecting Women, Defending Rights, which did not have this approach in their design.

In partnership with the national Government and the judiciary, UN Women supported the development of protocols to investigate femicide, a crime that was codified under federal law in 2015. Moreover, UN Women assisted states in Brazil to identify and report cases of femicide in a context in which legislation on the issue was new in the country and states were still adapting. Despite a small budget, UN Women contributed to important results in this process by leveraging strong networks and continuity over time. While the development of femicide protocols was a key result of the previous Strategic Note, the dissemination of protocols at the subnational level continued throughout the current Strategic Note, reaching nine states in 2021. Up to the end of the reporting period, public security or justice institutions of eight states were using protocols to investigate femicides, including in Federal District, Maranhão, Mato Grosso do Sul, Pernambuco, Piauí, Rio de Janeiro, Santa Catarina and São Paulo.

In addition to its work in this area, in 2020 the Country Office launched the publication *Femicide: Summary of the Project to Adapt the Latin American Protocol Model to*

Investigate Gender-Based Violent Deaths of Women in the Brazilian Context (2014–2018) and supported the Ministry of Justice on the distance e-learning course Introduction to National Protocol of Investigation and Expertise in Crimes of Femicide. UN Women also developed guidelines used by subnational governments to support service providers, such as the Guidelines for Assisting Cases of Gender-Based Violence Against Girls and Women in Times of the COVID-19 Pandemic.⁶⁹ This area of work was successful in reaching its target based on the desk review and interviews with the Country Office team carried out as part of this evaluation. That said, although the legislative framework on femicide has advanced for women in Brazil with Country Office support, stakeholders reported that a key ongoing problem is the lack of a follow-up mechanism to monitor implementation.

The other key initiative within this area of work was the One Win Leads to Another project, which was assessed in depth through the case study (Annex 6.1). The project phase under evaluation had a budget of US\$2.7 million implemented over 2018–2022 and was funded by the International Olympic Committee as a continuation of the pilot phase over 2015–2017 around the time of the 2016 Olympic Games hosted by Brazil in Rio de Janeiro. The project was inspired by an initiative of Women Win, a fund from the Netherlands that developed a methodology to empower women through sports. This project was implemented in various countries, including Argentina, after being piloted in Brazil in 2016. While the pilot phase of the project was implemented in partnership with the Rio de Janeiro state government, the phase under evaluation was implemented through CSOs given operational challenges faced in the previous iteration.

Key results of the project included developing the capacity of target groups at the individual and organizational level. This included:

- Enhancement of technical capacity of CSOs, notably Empodera, which received direct coaching from Women Win. Many grass-roots organizations were involved in project implementation and benefited from engaging with the United Nations “brand”, learning its procedures and learning from other organizations in the Collective Impact Coalition group that was developed.
- Capacity-building for trainers on gender and race. During the pandemic, trainers received intense training and were also coached in the first round of implementation with direct support from Empodera.
- Capacity-building for young leaders from the project who had the opportunity to receive additional training. The abilities to plan their futures and speak up for their rights were identified as major results.

Young girls also benefited from the project, but in varying and often limited degrees. Changing mindsets takes a long time. However, effective safe spaces were created for girls to speak freely about their concerns. Learning to dialogue was a key skill developed by the project.

BOX 7. Testing theory of change assumptions

A main assumption of the Country Office strategy in this impact area was that capacity developed would be used by CSOs, activists and individual women to promote gender equality. There is strong evidence that capacity was gained and used to promote gender equality, as detailed further in the case study included in Annex 6.1.

One Win Leads to Another was less successful in developing sports skills, and there was not enough time to work with both the gender curriculum and sports. There were also operational difficulties in the small organizations having to handle the burden of UN Women’s corporate compliance, considering many of them had very limited capacity. Furthermore, although many girls were empowered, the problem of violence was not sufficiently addressed. The project was implemented in low-income communities with high levels of violence and little government presence. While the project would indicate that girls should report abuse to the police, there were no police available and few if any organizations to refer to. Many classes were cancelled due to riots between the police and organized crime gangs, and project personnel perceived that their physical safety was not adequately considered. The violence problems in the State of Rio de Janeiro are of a structural nature. Focus groups of girls expressed fear of being by a window due to the risk of being hit by a stray bullet.

BOX 8. Highlighted outputs from the One Win Leads to Another project

- Nearly **1.9 million people reached** via social media.
- **15 young leaders implemented 8 projects** in their communities on topics related to project curriculum, benefiting a total of 205 girls in 2019.
- **19 girls implemented online projects** in 2020 aimed at creating communication pieces on topics approached by the project curriculum.
- **50 girls participated in a two-day Leadership Camp**, and 29 girls participated in the Digital Storytelling Workshop.
- **Technical assistance** was provided to the National Olympic Committee to develop the online learning course on ending harassment in sport, which was launched in March 2020 and had 3,615 participants.
- **50 beneficiary girls** participated in the OWLA Games, supported by the Brazilian National Olympic Committee.
- **Creation of a Collective Impact Coalition** on Gender and Sport, reaching 37 organizations that provided opportunities for exchange among different organizations, despite its eventual demobilization.



Source: UN Women project reporting

The project had different phases: before, during and after the pandemic. During the pandemic, the project gave girls a cash card to buy food at grocery stores. This significantly increased class attendance and provided an important lesson. The monitoring and evaluation mechanisms developed were complex and not fully adequate for the project context, as the system was passed on as a technology by Women Win but needed more adaptation to better fit into the project context. The project also faced operational challenges, including changes in the team and high administrative demands as a result of direct implementation. The project showed its potential sustainability as evidenced by: the tools developed; the open access methodology shared in Portuguese; the capacity developed with civil society organizations; and the training of benefited girls. Regarding the indicator within the overall Strategic Note, limited results were identified in changing the mindsets of girls towards the assessment that “men are naturally violent” (see Annex 6.1 for further discussion).

In addition to the One Win Leads to Another project, the Country Office implemented the Brave Is Not Violent initiative, which provided training material on ending violence against women and girls that reached several layers of the education system. The curriculum was adopted by six schools in Bahia State, as well as two subnational state-level machineries for women in Bahia and Espírito Santo and the municipalities of Juazeiro and Itabira. In the case of Bahia, an evaluation was carried out and showed progress in students' knowledge of laws and in attitudes with respect to general themes related to sex, gender and power relations.⁷⁰

There was engagement from the government of Federal District to include a debate week on ending violence against women in the official calendar of local schools, and the Secretariat of Education issued a recommendation to use the Brave Is Not Violent project curriculum as a basis for discussions. There was also an effort to adapt the tool to the humanitarian context in Boa Vista, where six workshops were delivered to migrants, refugees and humanitarian stakeholders. In terms of the work around dissemination and guidance on essential services for women, UN Women has taken a cross-cutting approach through different projects within the impact portfolio. More specifically, it helped disseminate guidelines to respond to ending violence against women and girls during COVID-19, but there was not a focus on this work under this Strategic Note.

UN Women strongly supported the development of knowledge and organizational capacity amongst civil society in this Strategic Note. A further example was the project Connecting Women, Defending Rights (€1.5 million budget from 2019–2022). The project aimed to promote safe spaces for women human-rights defenders to develop collective action, advocacy and protection strategies and to promote public outreach to address harmful stereotypes and hate speech. The scope of this project focused on civil society. Four key results were achieved in the time frame of the Strategic Note based on Country Office annual reporting:

- A mapping of 283 women human-rights defender organizations and baseline information on the situation of defenders in Brazil;
- Mental health support offered to 29 women human-rights defenders;
- Emergency funding made available to seven women human-rights defender organizations during COVID; and
- Capacity development provided to CSOs on security assessment, digital security and planning.

Focus group data from a previous rapid assessment exercise⁷¹ indicated that the training provided was of high quality and relevance, although it was too short for the depth of the topic. UN Women was recognized as a partner that is able to provide quality courses and publications while adapting to the pandemic. In a context in which many suffered from mental health challenges, UN Women refocused on the area of mental health, given that such issues were nominally aggravated in cases of activists who care for others, as identified during the baseline survey of the project.⁷² The project dynamic had to be redesigned, and activities that were planned for the beginning of the project – such as “situation rooms” – had to be postponed and will take place at the end of the project. Small grants were also identified as a key modality to help women human-rights defenders.

Several strategic and operational issues limited the potential of the project to achieve higher level results. There was some involvement with state actors, as evidenced by institutional dialogues with the National Congress, the Federal Prosecutor's Office and the National Protection Programme for Human Rights Defenders. However, the overall strategic focus of the project on civil society limited the potential scope of impact, as the project was kept low profile considering the sensitivity of the issues involved and the context of the pandemic, in which public debate was geared towards health issues. Another initiative of the project was a study on the financing of services to protect women human-rights defenders. As with other initiatives by the Country Office over the Strategic Note period, the project equally suffered from a complete restructuring of the team during its implementation. Some stakeholders expressed concern of not receiving sufficient visibility through the project's communications. The support of UN Women was more visible, and other relevant partners did not receive proper credit for the initiative.

Regarding South–South cooperation as a cross-cutting theme in the Country Office, one highlight was the project Brazil–Africa: Fighting Poverty and Empowering Women through South–South Cooperation, which gave assistance to the Mozambican Government to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, inspired by Brazilian experiences. Project results were not highly visible, particularly in terms of reports and training activities, with limited follow-up policy action. In fact, work with South–South cooperation was limited, with the exception of this initiative and support to the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and the Partnership for the Promotion of South–South Cooperation in the Area of Gender Equality with ABC.

⁷⁰ UN Women, One Win Leads to Another project report.

⁷¹ Rapid Assessment, Connecting Women, Defending Rights, 2021.

⁷² Baseline survey, Connecting Women, Defending Rights, 2020.

FINDING 8

UN Women has addressed specific needs of women in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on women facing multiple forms of discrimination, but the emergency situation negatively affected delivery and the presence of the Country Office in the field.

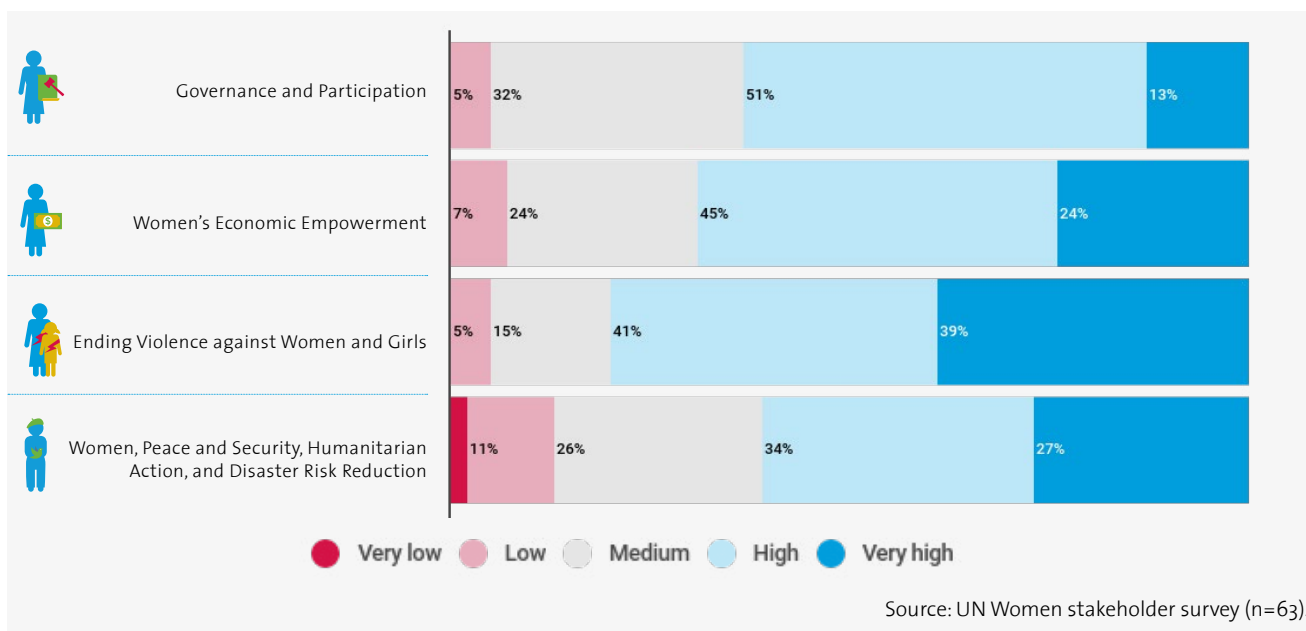
The Country Office published four briefing notes on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Brazilian women, namely on indigenous women, on women of African descent, on women's political participation and on women candidates. Key informant interviews showed that the briefing notes were welcomed and relevant for women activists. In addition, there was a joint note on domestic workers in partnership with the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA)⁷³ in cooperation with the Brazilian Government. Another initiative with IPEA undertaken with resources from UN Women was the redesign of the Portrait of Inequalities of Gender and Race, which is yet to be launched.

Initiatives that were very relevant included the small grants made available to domestic workers through FENATRAD, to women human-rights defenders, to indigenous and Afrodescendant women, and to girls participating in the One Win Leads to Another project. These target groups

were the most affected by the pandemic, considering that many of these women work informally and as a result suffered more in the context of the pandemic. On the other hand, the financial delivery rate was lower for 2019 (84 per cent) and 2020 (82 per cent) in comparison with previous years, and partners noted the absence of UN Women in the field, particularly in Roraima and Itabira.

Overall, partners rated highest the value added of UN Women in the thematic area of Ending Violence against Women and Girls (80 per cent assessed as high or very high), followed by the areas of: Women's Economic Empowerment (69 per cent); Governance and Participation in Public Life (64 per cent); and Women, Peace and Security, Humanitarian Assistance, and Disaster Risk Reduction (61 per cent). Work on Ending Violence against Women and Girls may be more visible to partners than other areas, and funding availability over the period may have influenced partner ratings.

FIGURE 9 Partner assessment of UN Women's value added by key thematic area⁷⁴



⁷³ See https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/nota_tecnica/200609_nt_disoc_n_75.pdf.

⁷⁴ UN Women Brazil Stakeholder Survey Q17: Please rate the level of value added by UN Women in the areas listed below.

FINDING 9

The communication and advocacy efforts of UN Women on gender delivered important partnerships, campaigns and events with measurable outreach. While partners recognized this work, there was a need for more innovative and creative approaches to the Country Office communication strategy, including reaching groups in situations of vulnerability.

Overall, partners provided a positive assessment of the work of UN Women in the media, including its ability to challenge stereotypes (73 per cent). At the same time, key stakeholders expressed concern that UN Women had not been creative enough to adapt to new media and developments in the area (Figure 10). In fact, the evaluation found that there may be less space for creativity, joint work and stability than needed to ensure an effective communication strategy. Nevertheless, the Country Office managed to reach large audiences through specific campaigns and

partnership with media corporations, especially TV Globo, which has the largest audience amongst Brazilian broadcast television channels. In this case, campaigns that would have exceeded the resources available for Country Office communication activities were launched at no cost through strategic partnerships that took advantage of the fact that UN Women is a legitimate voice on gender equality and women’s empowerment in Brazil.

FIGURE 10 Partner assessment of UN Women communications

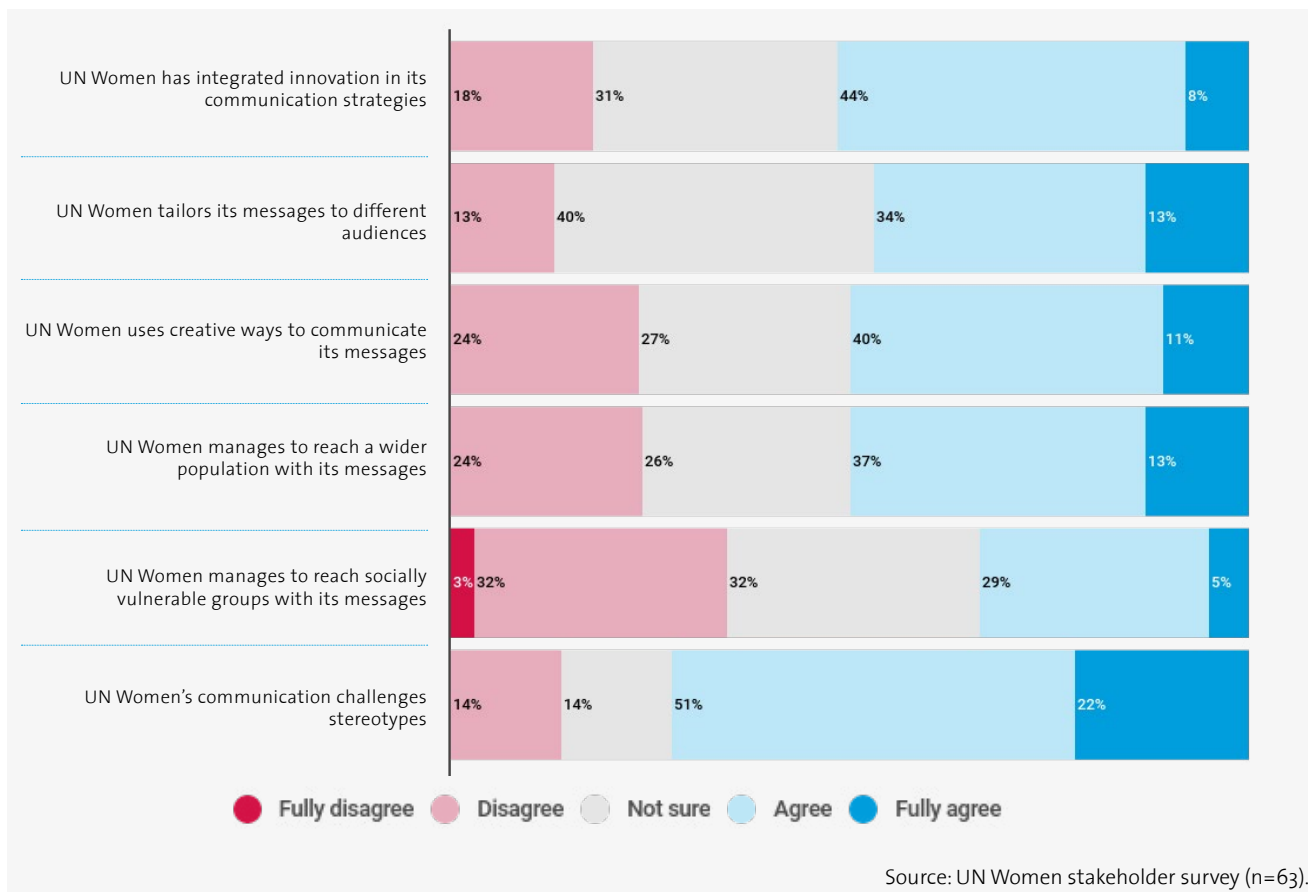







Table 2 shows key results and actions of the Country Office in terms of communication efforts. There are important partnerships with big media companies in the country, and effort in keeping up with communication campaigns, training and outreach activities.

However, as it has happened with the United Nations system as a whole in Brazil, public debate on gender has been kept in a low profile.

TABLE 2 Highlights of communication results of the Brazil Country Office in 2017–2021

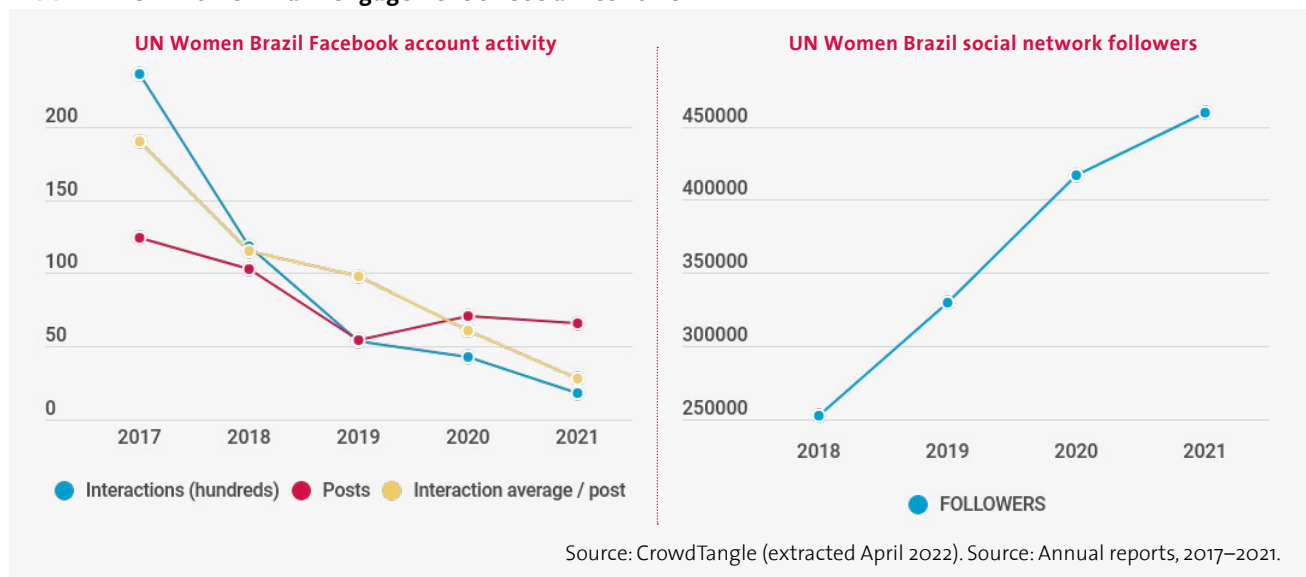
TYPE	HIGHLIGHTS
 CAMPAIGNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • @ElesPorElas (HeForShe) through Facebook and Instagram • UNITE annual campaign on UN Women social media • #CarnavalHeForShe campaign, with billboards, illuminated buildings, the screening of a video campaign in subways and buses in the city of São Paulo and on television
 EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HeForShe Art Week • HeForShe Congress promoted by the Universidade Federal da Paraíba, reaching 1,000 people
 TELEVISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ending Violence against Women and Girls campaign claiming “Respect” of women and women’s lives in 2018 • The exhibition Present Fathers: Active Fatherhood in Sweden and Brazil, at a central subway station in São Paulo, reaching around 80,000 passengers • #EntreSemBater for the 16 Days of Activism to End Gender-Based Violence • Video produced by Globosat News Television (GNT) and UN Women and HeForShe about women’s entrepreneurship as part of the collaborative production of content in the scope of GNT’s commitment to the HeForShe movement • 2019 cartoon on gender roles produced by UN Women in partnership with the subnational government of Federal District and UNDP, reaching one million views in 2020
 COURSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop during the seventh National Scout Jamboree, in the city of Barretos, reaching around 1,500 adolescents in the context of the HeForShe campaign • Workshop on positive masculinities with Google and Instituto Promundo, a Brazilian non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on engaging men and boys in gender equality • Training of journalists in the scope of the Zika project
 OTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Country Office supported ISA.bot, an artificial intelligence technology for social media platforms that provided information and support for women users on gender-based cyberattacks, developed by the NGOs Think Olga and Nossas, in partnership with Facebook and Google • UN Women Goodwill Ambassador Camila Pitanga, Advocates for Black Women’s Rights Kenia Maria and Taís Araújo, and Advocate for Ending Violence against Women Juliana Paes collaborated for mobilization through social media • CSO CFNTX, supported by UN Women, developed the Women in Movement campaign in 2020, which connected 23 women collectives in the State of Pará to create material and disseminate information at local level on how women in violent situations can seek support from essential services

Source: Annual reports, 2017–2021.

In terms of social media outreach and visibility, the number of interactions in UN Women's Facebook account significantly decreased (Figure 11). This indicated a declining relevance of Facebook use for the Country Office communication strategy as part of an overall global trend. Engagement as measured by Facebook interactions decreased 93 per cent between 2017 and 2021, while the number of posts decreased 47 per cent during this period. Such a decrease in Facebook outreach was nonetheless counterbalanced by growth in followers of other social networks, such as Twitter and Instagram.

The total number of followers of UN Women Brazil social networks increased over the period by 82 per cent to nearly half a million (Figure 11). This shows a diversification in its targeted mediums for reaching new audiences, but this was not clearly established or monitored as part of Country Office communications and advocacy work. Indicators related to the communication area also demonstrated good performance from the perspective of planned results and monitoring tools (see Annex 6.15, Table 6.15.4).

FIGURE 11. UN Women Brazil engagement on social networks



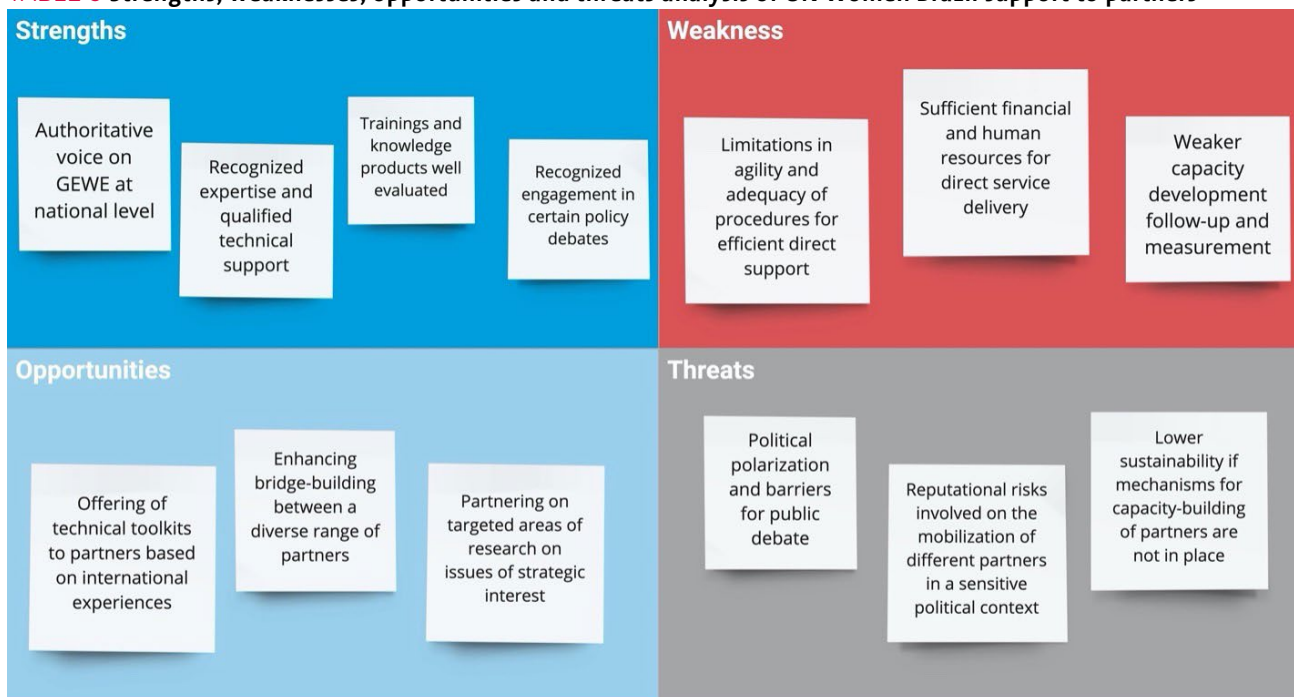
FINDING 10

UN Women was recognized as a relevant and legitimate partner that brought normative support, policy advice and data. However, it faced challenges in direct implementation.

Partners reported being most satisfied with the support provided by UN Women in advocacy and social mobilization, as well as in integrated normative support, followed by integrated policy advice and comprehensive and disaggregated data. In the case of direct support and service delivery, survey results showed lower satisfaction, although it was still positive. Indeed, qualitative data indicated concern about UN Women's procedures and capacity to implement, which most likely also contributed to this lower assessment by partners. Accordingly, there was an opportunity for UN Women to build on where its excellence was

shown to be the strongest in terms of technical assistance, capacity development, production of quality materials and engagement in policy debate (Table 3). As for engagement, there were challenges in mobilizing and sustaining the Civil Society Advisory Group and the dialogue with the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity. This shows that that even though UN Women has much technical capacity, more can be done in terms of gathering partners and promoting collective action (e.g., mobilizing United Nations agencies in one forum and CSOs in other strategies).

TABLE 3 Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis of UN Women Brazil support to partners



Source: Developed by evaluation team on basis of data synthesis.

Finally, UN Women overall was well recognized by most stakeholders, who indicated an interest in maintaining a longer term partnership (Figure 12). Data indicated that the Country Office was seen as a relevant partner with expertise and an important voice in the country, although the assessment by partners was lower in more practical areas of collaboration, including meeting demands of organizations with which it collaborated. Surveyed stakeholders widely considered UN Women as a legitimate voice on gender issues in Brazil and recognized an open channel for dialogue.

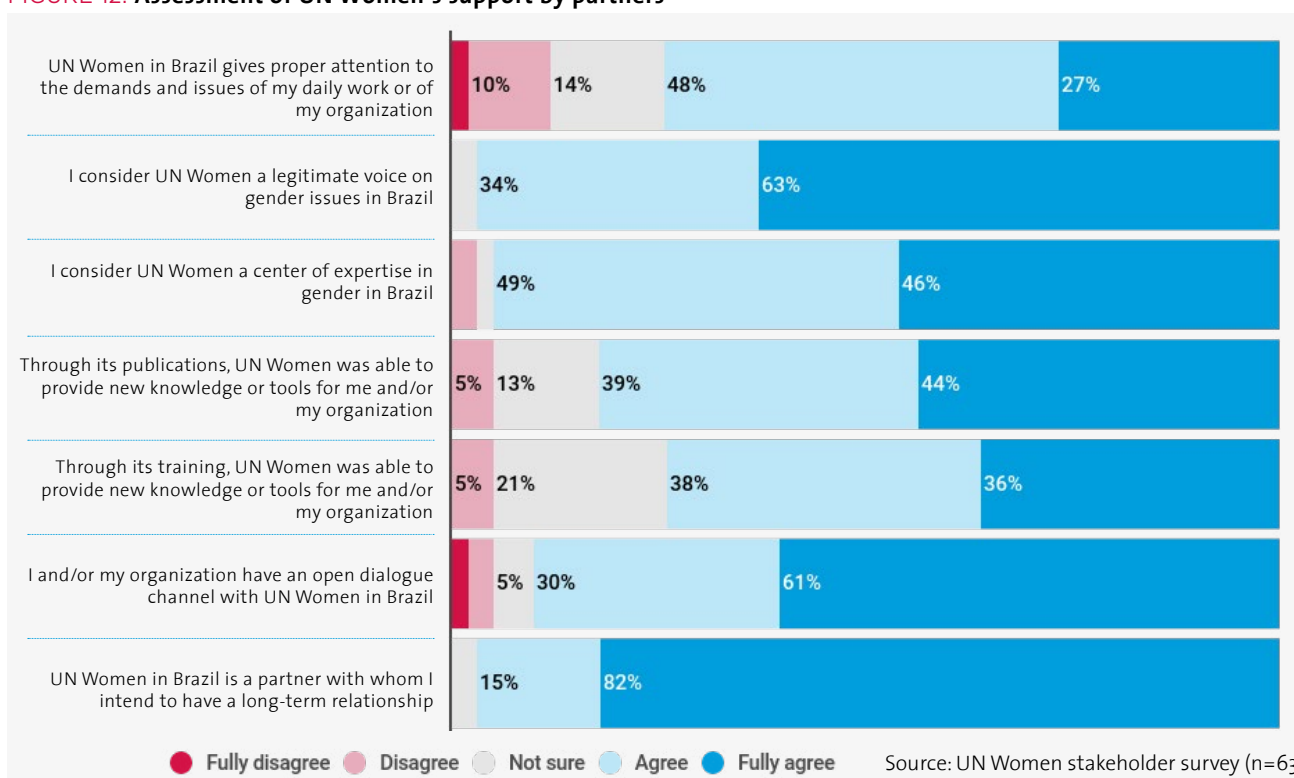
“UN Women capacity-building activity showed me how to identify and overcome sexist and racist barriers and situations.”

“In terms of the impact of UN Women activities on my personal life, I think that the empowerment is the main result.”

“Now I feel more confident to express my political opinions both at home and at public space.”

– Testimonials of three partners trained by UN Women as reported in survey.

FIGURE 12. Assessment of UN Women’s support by partners



3.3 EFFICIENCY

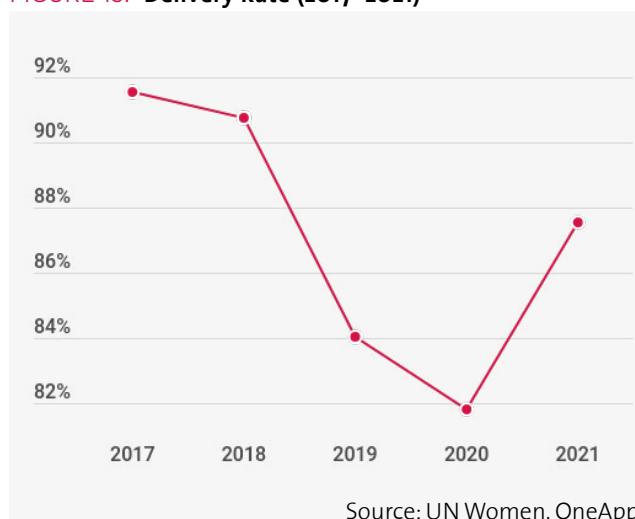
To what degree does UN Women have appropriate organizational structure, systems and capacity in place to support the efficient implementation of its programme of work?

FINDING 11

Despite a challenging scenario of changes and the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to some implementation issues, UN Women demonstrated strong delivery and monitoring of results, including through the optimization of the results framework, Country Office structure and the alignment of processes with organizational standards.

The Strategic Note was implemented within a challenging political, economic and public health environment, in particular during the COVID-19 pandemic period in 2020–2022, which delayed the implementation of projects and necessitated adaptations to the context. In terms of financial delivery, the Country Office reached an average rate of 86 per cent over the 2017–2021 period, which was a higher in comparison with the average delivery rate of the previous 2014–2016 period. Nevertheless, the average for the period hid a considerable decrease of the delivery rate in 2019 (84 per cent) – the first year following a change in both governmental and Country Office leadership – and in 2020 (82 per cent) – the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 13). The office managed to recover its delivery capacity in 2021, reaching a delivery rate of 88 per cent.

FIGURE 13. Delivery Rate (2017–2021)

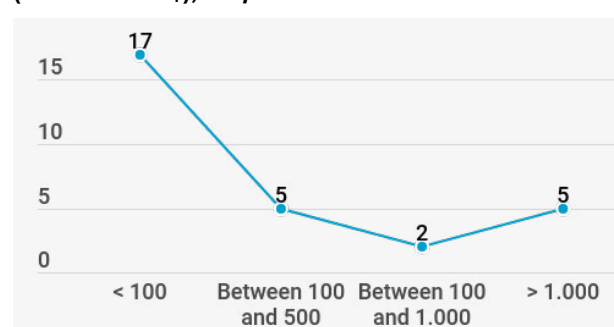


Two projects in partnership with the federal Government faced considerable delays, namely: Strengthening Public Policies for Women, with SNPM (US\$544,497), and Partnership for the Promotion of South–South Cooperation in the Area of Gender Equality, with ABC (US\$392,000). For example, the first agreement was not implemented, and the second agreement was signed in 2018, but the first contribution by the Government was made only at the end of 2020.

Another factor that hindered delivery was the fragmentation of the programme into small projects funded by several donors, which brought an increased administrative and institutional burden in terms of planning, monitoring and reporting.⁷⁵ Of the 29 projects signed between 2017 and 2021, 17 had a budget lower than US\$100,000, and 5 had a budget larger than US\$1 million (Figure 14). The 17 smaller projects within this sample of 29 total projects comprised almost 59 per cent of the total number of projects, while the sum of their budgets represented only about 17 per cent of the total project budget. Nevertheless, the 5 larger projects represented a total budget of about US\$12.1 million, indicating their relevance to the financial stability of the Country Office. It is important to note, however, that just a fraction of this amount was implemented by the office between 2017 and 2021, since three out of the five larger projects are ongoing and one project faced considerable budget constraints after signature.

This mosaic of donors contributing to small projects created additional barriers to personnel stability, since it was challenging to finance stable positions. Nonetheless, in some cases, donors contributed to the reduction of the administrative burden of partnerships by removing the obligation of reporting. In addition, as a response to the 2019 internal audit, the Country Office elaborated a resource mobilization strategy and plan for 2020–2022, in which smaller projects aim to contribute directly to Strategic Note outcomes and outputs, which can reduce the reporting burden.

FIGURE 14. Number of projects by budget range (thousands US\$), 2017–2021



⁷⁵ The 2019 audit mentioned that the results framework of the Country Office was ambitious (12 Impact, 28 Outcome and 21 Output indicators in the DRF and 26 Output indicators in the OEEF). As a result, the office streamlined its results framework.

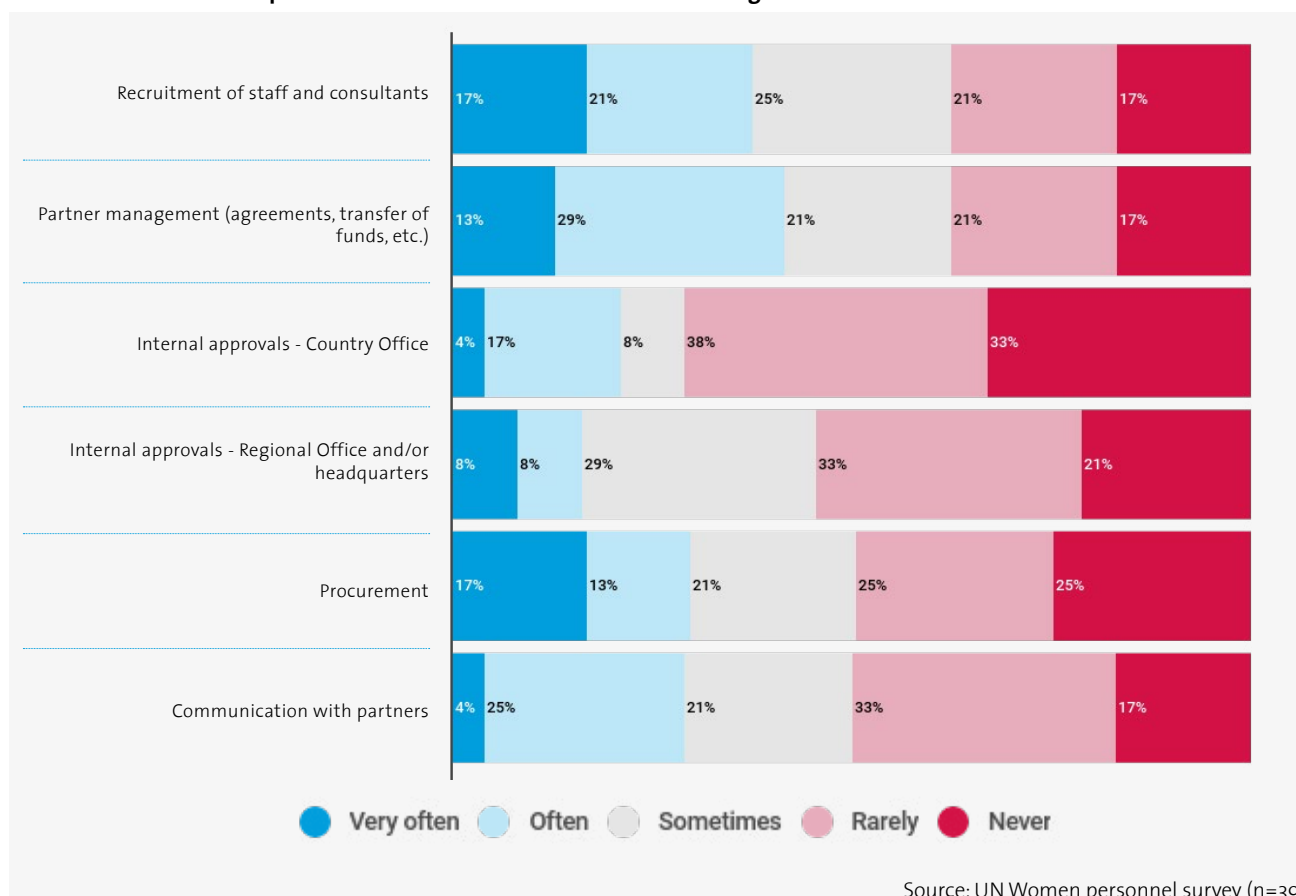
Regarding risk management, until 2021 the Country Office prepared annual risk registers with contextual, normative, programmatic, institutional, coordination, operational and fiduciary risks. These risks have covered a broad range of areas⁷⁶ with mitigation measures and clear responsibilities, but there was no monitoring identified in quarterly and annual reports. The office indicated that beginning in 2022, it would start to monitor risk on a quarterly basis, as part of quarterly reviews of the implementation of project documents and annual work plans. Implementation of an appropriate risk mitigation strategy, according to several interviews, was also a concern with regard to personnel security in the field, especially in more sensitive contexts such as Roraima and Rio de Janeiro.

Administrative bottlenecks emerged as a relevant problem based on interviews with UN Women personnel, which converged on some core perceived issues related to excessive layers of approval, even for simple processes, and frequent delays in approvals; lack of clarity about responsibilities and procedures; limited communication between

programme and operations areas; and excessive number and length of meetings. Surveyed personnel found that the office commonly faced several categories of administrative bottlenecks (Figure 15). Thirty-five per cent of the respondents affirmed on all six categories that they have often or very often faced significant bottlenecks in management areas, especially in relation to recruitment, partner management, procurement and communication with partners.

Despite these challenges, the initiative since March 2020 of implementing new standard operating procedures was well received by staff,⁷⁷ even though many reported that there is still room for improvement to achieve their purpose to establish clear deadlines, responsibilities and actions for each procedure. There was a concern that the new standard operating procedures have established new layers of approval even for simple requests, which contributed to an increase in the personnel workload, indicating an ongoing need for further testing and reviewing of the new procedures.

FIGURE 15. UN Women personnel feedback on bottlenecks in management areas⁷⁸



⁷⁶ Such areas included political uncertainty or instability, safety and security, the economic climate, sexual harassment or sexual exploitation and abuse, limited funding and/or resource mobilization, human resources management, programme/project delivery, partnership capacity, operational support, procurement fraud risk and business continuity.

⁷⁷ This was implemented following the establishment of critical positions, such as Operations Analyst since its abolishment in 2013 and Human Resources Assistant, and finance, human resources and procurement support.

⁷⁸ Survey question: How often do you experience significant bottlenecks in the following management areas, if at all?

Regarding results-based management, the Country Office increased its internal monitoring capacity over the Strategic Note period, including through actions taken following the midterm review. The office hired a Monitoring and Evaluation Analyst, rationalized and prioritized strategic outputs and indicators, and determined baselines and targets for indicators. The office generally monitored indicators of the Strategic Note in a timely and quality manner:⁷⁹ an evaluability assessment found that most indicators were measurable, specific, clearly related to outcomes and outputs, and written in plain language.

OEEF indicators were generally rated higher than those of the Development Results Framework (DRF), and the output level was adequate across both frameworks. Moreover, there was an adequate focus on forms of outcome-level change (behaviour, institutional performance, beliefs/attitudes). Outputs were within the delivery capacity of the Country Office and correctly addressed changes in skills, awareness, capacity and institutional arrangements. Table 4 offers a more detailed image of the rating of outcomes, outputs and indicators divided into DRF and OEEF sections.

TABLE 4. Assessment of outcomes, outputs and indicators by level of the results frameworks⁸⁰

	Strong	Adequate	Weak	
Development Results Framework				
Outcomes (3)	0%	33%	67%	
Outcome indicators (8)	38%	13%	50%	
Outputs (7)	29%	57%	14%	
Output indicators (11)	18%	18%	64%	
Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness Framework				
Outputs (9)	44%	44%	11%	
Output indicators (15)	53%	47%	0%	

Source: Evaluation team based on indicator framework of the revised Strategic Note.

Some factors continued to hinder the monitoring capacity of the Country Office, such as the capacity for management and leveraging of monitoring tools at the project level,⁸¹ data quality of baselines,⁸² as well as practices for measuring training and capacity development activities.

With regard to indicator quality, some limitations included indicators using the same data to report progress on different groups⁸³, indicators that do not sufficiently measure change⁸⁴, one indicator being measured every four years⁸⁵ and indicators that are not clearly related to UN Women contributions to results.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ UN Women Brazil was recognized internally as having the second highest quality annual report in 2020, receiving a “satisfactory” quality rating.

⁸⁰ For further details, see Annex 6.11 – Evaluability Assessment.

⁸¹ See example of the use and management of Salesforce in the case study, annex 6.1.

⁸² A considerable portion of baselines (13 out of 53, or 25 per cent) included as a source the generic definition of UN Women records for both DRF and OEEF indicators.

⁸³ DRF 1.1.2A focused on women candidates, and DRF 1.1.2B focused on gender equality advocates.

⁸⁴ DRF 2.1.2A and DRF 3.1.1B.

⁸⁵ DRF 1.1G.

⁸⁶ DRF 2.1C and DRF 2.1E.

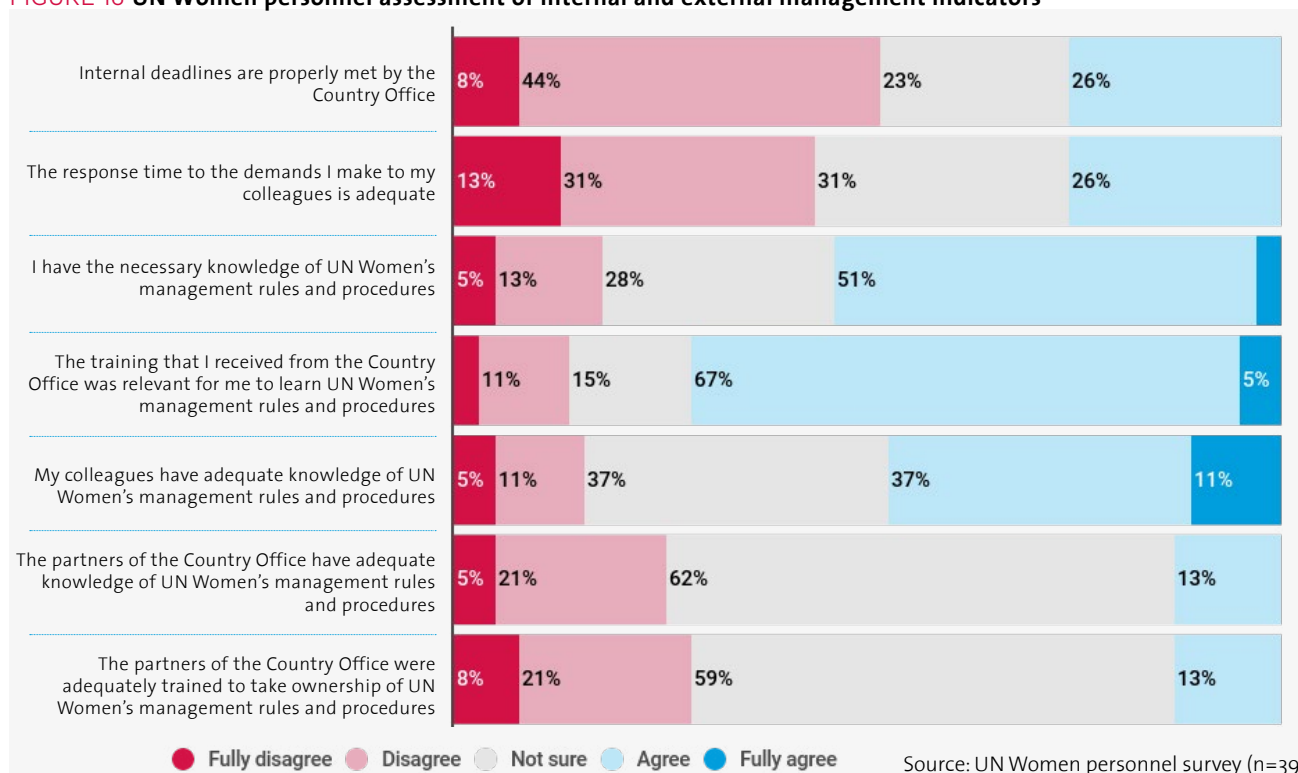
FINDING 12

The responsiveness of the Country Office was well evaluated by some stakeholders, although challenges were identified in executing a timely response to external demands and in maintaining the territorial coverage of interventions.

In general, evidence was mixed with regard to the responsiveness of the Country Office to stakeholders. Some CSOs that benefited from small grants confirmed in interviews that they had received adequate and clear instructions about UN Women rules and procedures and stressed UN Women's readiness for support whenever needed. Most surveyed stakeholders agreed or fully agreed that their organizations had an open dialogue channel with UN Women in Brazil, and nearly all surveyed partners intended to maintain a partnership with the Country Office. In addition, the office was largely responsive to positioning itself in partnerships to face two emerging crises: the mixed influx of Venezuelan migrants and refugees and the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, civil society partners, especially from grass-roots organizations, faced administrative barriers in accessing UN Women resourcing and support, since many of them have lower levels of institutional development. Such barriers stemmed in part from corporate policies beyond the direct control of the Country Office. Challenges were notably echoed by UN Women personnel; a higher proportion found gaps meeting internal deadlines and responding in a timely manner (Figure 16). Nearly a third of UN Women personnel also identified significant gaps in how well partners were knowledgeable and adequately trained to meet the administrative requirements of UN Women. Some interviewees also reported the lack of UN Women presence in the field or delays in the delivery of technical input by the Country Office.

FIGURE 16 UN Women personnel assessment of internal and external management indicators



Between 2017 and 2021, UN Women allocated field personnel in Boa Vista (Roraima State), Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro State), São Paulo (São Paulo State) and Itabira (Minas Gerais State). The field presence posed new administrative demands to UN Women in terms of travel and procurement, which resulted in additional operational bottlenecks. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the Country Office faced additional challenges to maintain its local presence due to safety protocols, and some stakeholders

related in interviews that the UN Women presence in the field decreased throughout the implementation of some interventions, lamenting a lack of UN Women support and dialogue. In the context of the humanitarian response to the Venezuelan emergency, the Country Office further aligned its focus to the economic empowerment of migrant and refugee women, including employability initiatives through the interiorization strategy.

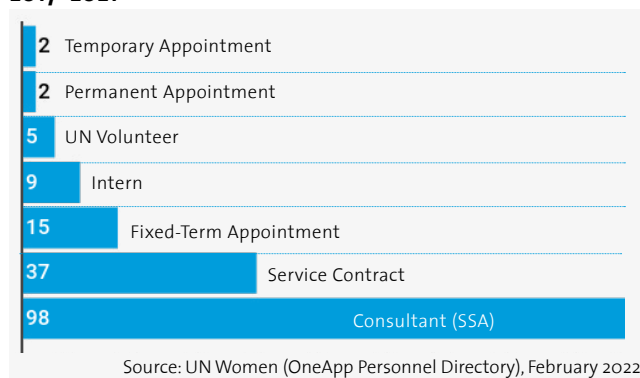
FINDING 13

UN Women personnel were considered highly qualified, but issues related to turnover and workload that were worsened by the pandemic presented structural problems in the area of human resources management that negatively affected the work environment, timely delivery of products, maintenance of institutional memory and sustainability of results.

The expertise and high technical capacity of Country Office personnel emerged as a relevant asset during interviews with UN Women stakeholders. Many partners recognized that Country Office personnel provided strong input and value through their points of collaboration. However, excessive workload and personnel turnover were identified in both interviews and surveys as relevant factors hindering delivery capacity and affecting the overall work environment, which had a negative impact on perceptions regarding the mental health of personnel.

The human resources model of the Country Office was based on a limited number of fixed-term appointments and a large number of temporary contracts, such as service contracts issued for the duration of a project.⁸⁷ These institutional constraints in the proportion of project-based, temporary personnel contributed to high turnover, which was worsened by the pandemic and identified in interviews as one of the main challenges to efficiency. As of December 2021, the Country Office had 83 active personnel of all contract types and a total of 164 persons contracted between 2017 and 2021 (Figure 17), illustrating the need for extensive investment in human resource processes overall, including administrative and substantive onboarding. While staff contracts had an average duration of 44 months, non-staff contractual modalities had an average duration of 11 months and consultants/interns had an average duration of 11.1 months.⁸⁸

FIGURE 17. Number of personnel by contract type, 2017–2021



Personnel turnover has multifactorial causes, but many interviews converged on the relevance of some key factors: a perceived excessive workload, a stressful work environment, short-term or temporary contractual conditions and instability of non-core resources. Interviews indicated that handover procedures were not clear for personnel, and training during onboarding was not well institutionalized, which increased the potential negative impact of turnover. This situation was reinforced by the personnel survey results (Figure 18), which showed that most respondents fully disagreed or disagreed (70 per cent) that the Country Office had adequate human resources to do its job effectively, and nearly half fully disagreed or disagreed (44 per cent) that their workload was manageable. This perception of insufficient resources equally impacted views on personnel well-being, including a high proportion who indicated an unacceptable level of stress on the job (62 per cent) and the inability to maintain a healthy balance between their work and personal life (49 per cent).

The Country Office has taken measures to address certain issues, such as hiring clerks and changing the organization chart to improve workflows and management. In fact, the office exceeded institutional thresholds for a mid-size UN Women office in terms of its personnel, which indicated sufficient human resource capacity.⁸⁹ The office also adopted a flexible work schedule, organized meetings with a stress counsellor, and hired a psychologist to provide mental health support sessions for personnel. More recently, actions included volunteering to pilot a contractual reform⁹⁰ and conducting internal surveys on the return to work after the ending of COVID-19 pandemic social distancing measures. In addition, the frequency of staff meetings was changed from weekly to biweekly, and the operations area was restructured to facilitate a better workflow. These efforts remained a work in progress and showed the relevance of accelerating and intensifying measures in response to personnel concerns related to the work environment. Further refinements in the management of workflows, prioritizing which actions to take on board, and decreasing turnover remain key issues to act upon.

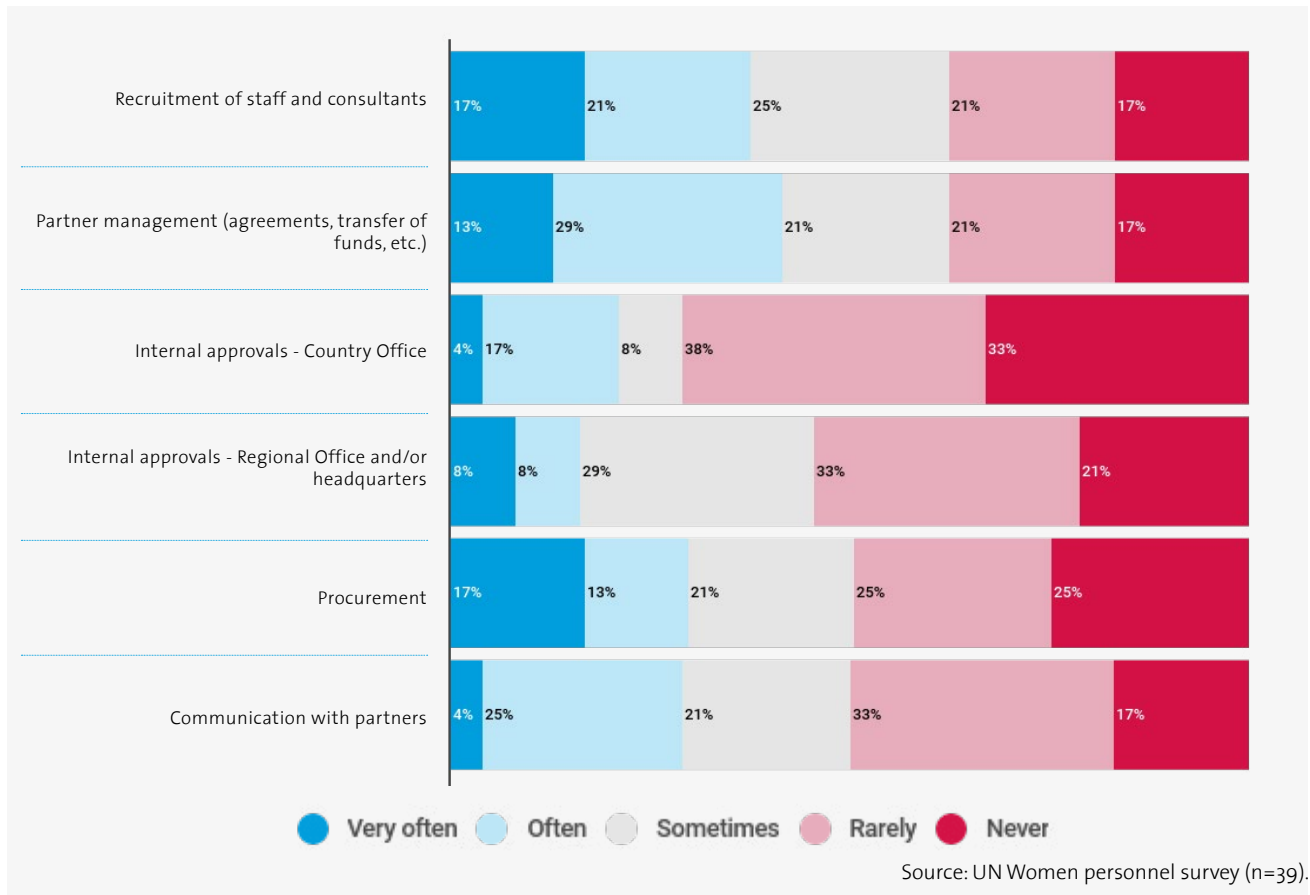
⁸⁷ This is observed more globally in UN Women, where decisions on the human resources structure of Country Offices are taken by the Executive Board, and funding thresholds are defined by headquarters.

⁸⁸ Personnel contracts are distributed over seven modalities between: staff members (Fixed-Term, Temporary and Permanent appointments); non-staff members (Service Contract and UN Volunteer); and consultants/interns (Special Service Agreement (SSA) and Intern).

⁸⁹ As a mid-size office (Tier 2), UN Women Brazil exceeded the standard threshold of staff members and SSA clerks supporting each impact area with the administrative and logistics tasks.

⁹⁰ UN Women has proposed to shift the Service Contract modality to the Personnel Service Agreements modality with more favorable conditions, entitlements and benefits.

FIGURE 18 UN personnel assessment on office work environment indicators



3.4 SUSTAINABILITY, GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

How has UN Women ensured national ownership and sustainability of programming efforts?

FINDING 14

UN Women focused on capacity development interventions at both the institutional and individual level, which contributed to the sustainability of results and ownership of some interventions by stakeholders. However, the practice for promoting the sustainability of UN Women's work was uneven, as evidenced by project design.

UN Women has been able to provide quality training and knowledge materials to partners at various levels in support of the sustainability of its programme. Over the Strategic Note period, 112 knowledge products were launched, including in-depth publications, leaflets, courses and other material.⁹¹ CSOs and United Nations agencies reported using these UN Women knowledge products, as evidenced, e.g., in 2021 by 320 professionals from stakeholder groups who developed new initiatives for refugee and migrant women in their organizations.⁹² Furthermore, most surveyed external partners fully agreed or agreed that they had advanced their knowledge as a result of UN Women's capacity development programmes (90 per cent), and that that UN Women provided quality knowledge products (92 per cent).

Complementary to knowledge products, the Country Office offered technical expertise to partners through issue briefs, ad hoc input and knowledge-sharing through meetings and established channels of dialogue. Through high-level dialogue, UN Women trained the Secretariat of Policies for Women of the Government of Brazil in preparation for the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2017) and its regional preparatory meeting. UN Women also supported the Secretary to organize the tenth Meeting of Ministers of Women's Affairs of MERCOSUR and the fifth Meeting of Ministers of Women's Affairs of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and the drafting of its plan of action for 2016–2018. Moreover, this kind of partnership was also established with local governments, the legislative and judiciary branches and CSOs. These methods of expertise-sharing were evaluated positively by stakeholders in interviews, although expectations for technical input were not always met fully or in a timely manner.

As a key modality for the delivery of capacity development activities, training efforts were generally well assessed, but both UN Women and partners indicated gaps that could improve learning and impact.

Nearly a third of respondents to the partner survey rated the effectiveness of such training efforts lower for most targeted stakeholder groups from United Nations, government and civil society. UN Women personnel also found that there were limited follow-up actions after training, such as efforts to measure the results of capacity development work. Such feedback underlined areas for ongoing improvement to ensure that knowledge is effectively applied, and that there are documented results of capacity development initiatives.

Regarding other practices that enhance sustainability through project management, there was a low proportion of explicit exit strategies across the Country Office portfolio. Most projects over the Strategic Note period did not present robust and clearly developed exit strategies in their project documents. Out of a total of 29 projects analysed, only 10 per cent presented a section of exit strategies with defined activities and objectives, and 31 per cent presented exit mechanisms that were identifiable in other sections of the project but not properly coordinated to provide planning for phasing out the project and transferring ownership of the intervention to local partners, whether governmental or civil society (Table 5).

TABLE 5. Inclusion of exit strategies in UN Women project documents

	# of projects	%
Informal	9	31%
No	17	59%
Yes	3	10%

Source: Evaluation team based on project documents.

In fact, the lack of sustainability mechanisms was identified during the interviews where governmental or beneficiary organizations were not always able to give continuity to the initiatives (e.g., Itabira).

⁹¹ UN Women annual reports, 2017–2021.

⁹² UN Women annual report, 2021.

Through direct implementation, many core functions of the interventions were centralized at the Country Office and did not involve the local government, thereby not supporting development of implementation capacity and ownership. In the case of CSOs, there were few mechanisms of sustainability, as they are very dependent on donor resources. Another example was the project Connecting Women, Defending Rights, where UN Women helped foster networks among activists and communication via webinars. The main concern about this project was sustainability. There are international networks and CSOs that work in this area, but challenges in engagement with more solid institutions and networks in the public sphere indicated a lower potential for long-term sustainability. As governments are characterized by complex structures that are often fragmented with distinct perspectives within, finding the right entry points would be strategic in future initiatives.

On the other hand, there were experiences that stand out as successful examples of sustainability, as in the case of HappyChild, which is a public policy that is being supported by a joint United Nations programme. The programme will continue and use knowledge provided by UN Women and other United Nations partners. In the case of the One Win Leads to Another project, capacity was built in one of the key implementing organizations, which was able to fund-raise and continue the work on its own.

Another relevant effort targeting sustainability was the implementation of small grants to CSOs focusing on their institutional strengthening. Changes in the Brazilian political and economic context narrowed channels of dialogue between public institutions and CSOs and decreased the resources available for CSO initiatives. Since 2020, UN Women has been providing small grants to selected CSOs working in diverse areas, with a focus on indigenous women, rural women, domestic workers and girls in sports. The Country Office employed the modality when it became available as a support tool to beneficiaries, and consulted partners emphasized the relevance of such support to the maintenance of civil society outreach. The office rapidly absorbed the new modality and provided small grants to grass-roots organizations focusing on strengthening their institutional capacities.

In terms of sustainability, the 31 small grants provided during the Strategic Note period were designed to strengthen CSOs and their advocacy and delivery capacities, which also has the potential to contribute to the scaling up of results, since the civil society entities that received small grants represented grass-roots organizations and local/regional networks with relevant capacity in dealing with women facing multiple forms of discrimination, as reflected in the small grants policy.

To what extent has the portfolio been implemented according to human rights and development effectiveness principles?

FINDING 15

The leave no one behind principle was incorporated into the design of most projects, and more widely at the programme level, notably following the Strategic Note revision that incorporated strategies to target specific groups of women such as those facing multiple forms of discrimination.

The Strategic Note and its main programmes consistently integrated the perspective that gender, racial, ethnic and income inequalities are intersectional, and that the promotion of a gender agenda in Brazil largely depends on addressing the needs of specific populations, especially black, indigenous and *quilombola* women, domestic workers, and migrants and refugees. In this sense, the Country Office leveraged cooperation with long-term stakeholders – such as black women’s organizations and domestic workers’ unions – with partnerships that emerged during the previous Strategic Note period that were consolidated in this programmatic cycle, such as

indigenous and *quilombola* women’s organizations and social movements. Relevant projects in the Governance and Participation impact area were tailored for *quilombola*, black and indigenous women. Projects within the Women’s Economic Empowerment impact area targeted migrant and refugee women from Venezuela, domestic workers (mostly black women) and rural women. For projects in the area of Ending Violence against Women and Girls, girls and adolescents represented the main stakeholders of important initiatives.

In the process of revising its Strategic Note, the Country Office added an annex defining specific groups of women who faced multiple forms of discrimination, which promoted a more explicit application of the leave no one behind lens across the programme. In this respect, the office prioritized seven groups of women based on a number of criteria such as demand, availability of financial resources, and the capacity of the Country Office team to focus and cover simultaneously various beneficiaries. These groups included: Afrodescendant women; *quilombola* women; rural women; indigenous women; defenders of women's human rights; migrant, asylum seeker and refugee women; and young women. Together, these population groups represent the main populations that are being left behind and configure some of the most relevant intersectionality inequalities that limit the achievement of gender equality in Brazil.

In addition to the programmatic level, the leave no one behind principle was equally reflected in terms of the definition of target populations as the main beneficiaries of some projects and through the institutional strengthening of CSOs that represent these populations. In the former, examples included the incorporation of training of migrant and refugee women from Venezuela, the distribution of food cards for girls to buy food at grocery stores in the One Win Leads to Another project, and the protection of human-rights defenders from traditional communities in the context of the Connecting Women, Defending Rights project. In the latter, there was a clear leave no one behind perspective in the definition of the small grants for organizations specially in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as long-term support that

contributed to the strengthening of strategic organizations and networks of most marginalized populations, as in the cases of FENATRAD (domestic workers) and ANMIGA (indigenous women).

Furthermore, the leave no one behind principle was largely incorporated in the Country Office project design with an emphasis on race and ethnicity. Based on an analysis of project documentation, a broader leave no one behind lens was reflected in 66 per cent of the office's portfolio. Of the 19 of 28 projects assessed as demonstrating a clear leave no one behind lens, both black women and indigenous women were addressed in 7 projects; both *quilombola* women and migrant/refugee women were addressed in 3 projects; the LGBTIQ+ population was addressed in 2 projects; and domestic workers, rural women and poor women were each addressed in 1 project. The project document analysis indicated that there is still an opportunity to continue strengthening specific consideration of women with disabilities, given that the disability perspective was integrated into an estimated 3 per cent of the portfolio.⁹³

Figure 19 summarizes the focus of UN Women in Brazil through the Gender at Work Framework. It categorizes a selection of programmatic, coordination and normative activities led by the Country Office under four categories: (1) promotion of awareness and capacity, (2) challenging deep norms and social structures, (3) access to resources and services and (4) changing of formal rules and policies. The figure shows a concentration on capacity/awareness, as well as formal rules/policies, while services/resources and social norms were targeted to a lesser extent.

⁹³ Including women and girls with disabilities was considered during the revision of the Strategic Note, and the Country Office decided to postpone inclusion of this group until the drafting of the next Strategic Note in favour of prioritizing the seven priority groups.

FIGURE 19 Mapping of the UN Women portfolio within Gender at Work framework

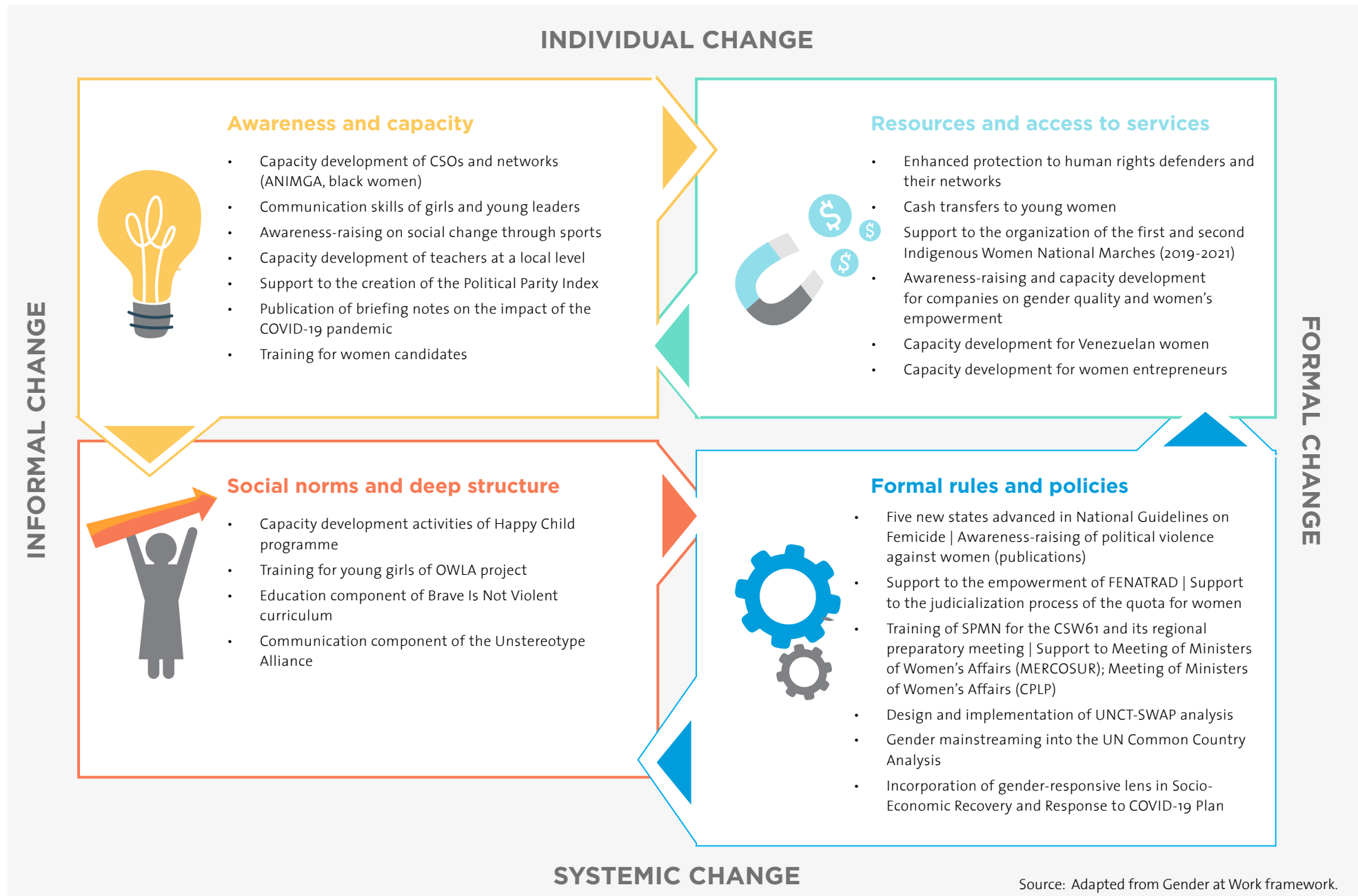




Photo ©UN Women/Camille Miranda

4. LESSONS LEARNED

This section provides general lessons across the operational, coordination and normative areas of the UN Women mandate for potential application to other contexts.



Engagement through **sports**, combined with **food cards**, is an effective tool for mobilizing girls to learn about gender equality and women's empowerment issues and can help increase buy-in, although sports is a powerful tool and has a merit on its own. Young girls are willing and open to learning and developing life skills that can have long-term results. With such groups, focused curricula with reiterative messages tend to be most effective. Furthermore, in contexts where young girls are in situations of increased vulnerability or dire need, food cards can help increase attendance and buy-in.



Optimization of **management processes** should be complemented with a strong enabling work environment, especially in the context of constraints in resources. As an important tool to increase efficiency and compliance, implementing such process changes together with measures to promote collaboration, feedback and motivation is crucial for any organizational change to achieve its goals.



High-level results and network effects can be reached even with modest financing under the right conditions, including through supporting the mobilization of strategic stakeholders, leveraging UN Women's expertise, and embedding feasible scaling and exit strategies. As evidenced through support for the development of protocols to investigate femicides in Brazil, relevant and sustainable results can be driven through mobilizing key actors from across the judiciary, federal and local governmental levels with modest resourcing.



Integration of **race into accountability mechanisms** is strategic to UN Women for addressing the intersectional causes of gender inequality through its United Nations coordination mandate. The adaptation of the UNCT–SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard by UN Women and partners in Brazil to integrate a race perspective into the analysis is an innovative practice with replication potential to deepen the corporate linkage of these dimensions.



Engagement with the **private sector** requires practical tools, continuity over time and buy-in from corporate leaders. Political commitment to the gender agenda is only the first step of a long journey where effective gender-responsive policies are implemented based on consistent technical assistance, dialogue and the availability of practical tools.



As a central function for promoting ownership of interventions and long-term impact, capacity development can be strengthened through **complementary practices upstream** (e.g., capacity development for technical improvement of national and state governments and national social networks) and **downstream** (e.g., capacity development of beneficiaries and grass-roots organizations).



The **leave no one behind** and human rights principles can be leveraged to scale up gender equality and the empowerment of women. As guideposts for mainstreaming a focus on the needs of rights holders and groups in situations of grave vulnerability, such principles are central to accelerate results and to fight the structural causes of gender inequality where the phenomenon is deeply connected with other intersectional disparities related to income, race, ethnicity, age, displacement and location.



The promotion of sustainable results is supported by **programmatic continuity**, strategic focus and the retention of personnel, among other factors. While targeted initiatives may bear short-term results under the right conditions, they are less likely to be institutionalized and achieve higher level results. In this sense, "less is more". Programmatic focus brings increased impact, along with a positive effect in other areas through increasing the streamlining of portfolios and a greater sense of achievement for staff.



Photo ©Fernando Frazão/Agência Brasil

5

Conclusions and recommendations

This section provides overall conclusions and recommendations related to each one of them. Over the implementation of the Strategic Note, the UN Women Country Office in Brazil has made important strides in its support of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. During this period, the country has also faced changes that have underlined the enormous progress yet to be made towards the achievement of UN Women's mission, particularly in the face of the added vulnerability of groups in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The size of the country, the scope of such challenges and the positioning of UN Women over the last decade in Brazil provide ample opportunity for growth of the Country Office to achieve greater impacts at scale.

A presentation of preliminary findings and discussion on the way forward took place with the UN Women Brazil Country Office and the Evaluation Reference Group to inform the recommendations presented below. The recommendations were also discussed in an internal session with members of the Country Office and Evaluation Reference Group, focusing on the importance and feasibility of actions to inform the management response (see Annex 6.8). Each recommendation is linked to a corresponding conclusion and includes key action items for consideration by the Country Office. The level of priority and timeline for implementation are also indicated below each recommendation.

CONCLUSION 1.

Based on findings

1, 3, 9 and 11

UN Women was recognized as a key voice on the gender agenda in Brazil and found to have contributed to achieving gender equality results with an array of partners. UN Women also demonstrated its relevance in the context of COVID-19, adapting to respond to the needs of women and girls in a crisis context. There was a demand for continued and expanded dialogue on COVID-19 and other issues, as well as potential for enhancing coherence and consistency among the myriad activities within the Country Office.

Over the period of Strategic Note implementation, UN Women leveraged its work through an array of partnerships, including the UNCT, civil society groups, subnational governments, the parliament, the private sector and other multistakeholder forums. The Country Office was responsive to grass-roots movements representing groups such as indigenous populations, black women, domestic workers and Venezuelan migrant women. This demonstrated its niche and value in engaging with relevant groups in situations of increased vulnerability in line with the leave no one behind principle. There remained a demand for more dialogue, advocacy and collaboration in different sectors, which indicated potential to further enhance partnerships.

Many stakeholders appreciated the work of UN Women during the pandemic, which demonstrated personnel resilience, dedication and adaptability in a crisis context. In response to the serious health conditions in the country, priority was given to reprogramming major initiatives and leveraging such modalities as small grants and food cards for targeted groups. Some other initiatives nonetheless stagnated in a context in which UN Women had to shift to remote work, including in the area of advocacy and policy dialogue. In terms of coherence, while important changes have helped to lessen project fragmentation and optimize its results framework, the portfolio would continue to benefit from a concerted effort to consolidate its strategic, geographic and thematic focus.

RECOMMENDATION 1.

Implement measures in the conceptualization, execution, and monitoring of the next Strategic Note to further enhance programmatic focus and coherence, building on the notable gains made since the midterm review exercise with a view towards enhancing the strategic positioning of the Country Office.

Related actions for consideration by the Country Office:

- Review the portfolio of current and planned actions according to strategic selection criteria established for the new Strategic Note with a view to heightened focus and impact across portfolio areas.
- Incorporate criteria in the selection of future funding opportunities (e.g., effort demanded, potential impact with focus on gender transformative initiatives, and relationship to core competencies and mandate).
- Identify in which initiatives the Country Office will engage, including to clearly articulate where it provides value added vis-à-vis its revised theory of change (e.g., policy advice, advocacy, research, communication, normative work, etc.).
- Identify areas of high-impact research related to monitoring the implementation of relevant legislation (e.g., fulfilment of quotas, electoral time on television, femicide protocol implementation) to meet the unmet demand for UN Women support.
- Identify possible links that can be made between the grass-roots work of the office and policy dialogue with the government at various levels.

Priority **HIGH** Timeframe **SHORT-TERM**

CONCLUSION 2.



Based on findings

4-5, 8 and 15

UN Women Brazil played an effective leadership role in the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity; enhanced the empowerment, leadership and political participation of historically excluded groups; and positioned the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda with the private sector. UN Women helped to develop capacity at the individual and institutional levels to support long-term change in some areas. However, increased involvement of governmental and state institutions at different levels would have enhanced the potential for more sustainable results, in addition to addressing the low attention ascribed to sustainability issues in project design.

Effective use of the UN Women coordination mandate was evidenced by the Country Office leadership of the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity and the application of the UNCT–SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard, including the incorporation of race into the tool's methodology as well as systematic follow-up with partners. UN Women provided support to the United Nations system in Brazil for joint strategic planning. Such efforts were widely recognized as influential and innovative, while it was also reported that working arrangements in this inter-agency group could be more inclusive. Progress by United Nations agencies in mainstreaming gender presents a corresponding set of wider actions, programming and opportunities for joint work and enhanced dialogue with the system.

UN Women Brazil had a strong drive towards implementing projects with potential for gender transformative change by targeting deeper causes of gender inequality through the promotion of the empowerment, leadership

and political participation of traditionally excluded groups as well as education and, to a more limited extent, policy-making and law-making.

On the other hand, there were opportunities for UN Women to engage more strategically with the legislative branch on advocacy and policy debate, as well as with the private sector and other partners.

UN Women contributed to the development of capacity in most of its target groups including CSOs and groups in situations of vulnerability, as demonstrated by the case study of the One Win Leads to Another project. Most capacity development activities took place through CSOs and less so through the Government, although there were notable initiatives to train government officials. Overall, limited partnerships with the Government and state institutions at different levels brought concerns in terms of sustainability, given their key role in developing public policy for sustaining results over time.



RECOMMENDATION 2.

Review the partnership framework and capacity development strategy with a view to foster links with the Government, systematize private sector engagement, clarify the role of the Civil Society Advisory Group and engagement with CSOs, and enhance dialogue with donors and United Nations partners in Brazil.

Related actions for consideration by the Country Office:

PARTNERSHIPS MANAGEMENT

- Identify scenarios of strategic areas of interest between the Country Office and the Government, including SNPM as well as different branches and levels.
- Intensify work with the parliament with a view to increasing advocacy in key areas of interest, identifying new areas and promoting key research in support of UN Women's research and normative areas of work (e.g., good practices for women in elections including vis-à-vis political violence, strategies for engagement of women politicians after the election, actual implementation of national norms at state and local levels).
- Identify internal focal points, responsibilities and engagement for high-level partnerships for managing long-term engagement within the organization.
- Embed and systematize the current approach to private sector engagement as a cross-cutting enabler of Country Office work.
- Embed sustainability strategies more explicitly into project design, including through partnership selection and engagement.
- Train staff on best practices for managing partners and regularly exchange through staff meetings the status of partnerships.
- Develop a training menu for external partners that can be delivered upon demand and used as a fundraising opportunity, including a training calendar considering the electoral cycle and key dates for the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda in Brazil.

UNITED NATIONS INTERAGENCY THEMATIC GROUP ON GENDER, RACE AND ETHNICITY

- Review and strengthen the coordination strategy on accountability for gender equality in close partnership with United Nations partners of the Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity with a focus on joint advocacy work.
- Reinforce the role of UN Women in the UNCT through the strengthening of the inter-agency group and the use of innovative methodologies.
- Clarify the role of the inter-agency group and its modus operandi to the other United Nations agencies and agree on a working method that is suitable to the agencies involved.

Priority *Timeframe*

HIGH

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM

CONCLUSION 3.

Based on findings

5, 11-14

UN Women made significant strides to enhance the systematization of its work modalities by establishing clear procedures and expected results and adopting stronger accountability practices in the Country Office. Challenges remained at the operational level that negatively affected continuity of actions over time, human resources stability and personnel workloads.

The Country Office made advances to enhance accountability practices, such as setting clear rules, procedures and tools for planning processes and knowledge management; developing theories of change for the Strategic Note and its main programmes; and monitoring results to support decision-making and enhance institutional accountability. This has borne important gains in the organizational efficiency and effectiveness of the office. Nevertheless, several problems hindered implementation capacity, especially in relation to high turnover rates, communication issues with

partners, and perceptions of high workloads and a stressful work environment. Modalities such as direct implementation also imposed a high burden on the Country Office, which was not well adapted to deal with grass-roots movements and informal organizations. Results-based management practices, including monitoring capacity and the indicator framework, also demonstrated opportunity to enhance the ability of the office to track, measure and report UN Women's potential impact.

RECOMMENDATION 3.

Further promote a culture of collaboration and innovation, building an enabling work environment for personnel while also strengthening results-based management practices to capture and communicate Country Office results and fine-tune its programming.

Related actions for consideration by the Country Office:

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

- Review current standard operating procedures and collect staff feedback for continuous improvement, training and enhanced use.
- Identify partners that can help with local implementation of projects, avoiding direct implementation.
- Human resources and internal collaboration
- Review the workload distribution of personnel with a view to achieving greater work–life balance.
- Designate a staff member who can be in charge of internal communication and post relevant decisions and office news on an accessible platform.
- Enact measures to increase trust and collaboration among team members, providing safe spaces for feedback to personnel on an individual basis.
- Assign to each new team member a peer or buddy to help with information, induction and integration in the organization.
- Develop an introduction session for new team members – as part of wider new hire corporate practice – for in-person training on relevant UN Women work areas, procedures and employment conditions.
- Decrease the gender imbalance in the office and increase diversity for an inclusive work environment.

RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

- With support from the Regional Office, provide targeted training on results-based management methods.
- Standardize the planning and monitoring processes of projects and programmes, establishing clear connections with the Strategic Note and the Strategic Plan through the deployment of clear and feasible monitoring tools.
- Focus Strategic Note indicators on areas of plausible outcome and impact-level change linked to the theory of change and operationalized communications strategy of the next Strategic Note.
- Reinforce the sense of communal office results achievement, in recognition that initiatives are cross-cutting and the joined nature of operation–programme personnel working together.

Priority **HIGH** Timeframe **SHORT-TERM**

CONCLUSION 4.

Based on finding

15

UN Women was responsive to the principle to leave no one behind and largely incorporated populations in situations of vulnerability into its work. Its work helped to address deeper causes of inequality through access to power, resources and opportunities, leading to the empowerment of women and girls. There remained scope to more explicitly target other key populations in line with United Nations principles, such as people with disabilities.

Most projects of the Country Office over the period incorporated the leave no one behind principle, and work largely focused on addressing the needs of populations in situations of vulnerability from a political, economic and social point of view. The work of UN Women has been on social mobilization and evidence-based advocacy, capacity development, knowledge-sharing, policy debate and training, all activities that are apt for questioning the basis of inequality between women and men. In this sense, the nature of the activities of the Strategic Note has been generally oriented towards supporting gender transformative change. Gender inequality was addressed through an

intersectional approach in which income, ethnic and racial disparities appeared as mutually connected, which led to a more integrated response from UN Women Brazil that tailored a relevant part of its projects to specific populations such as domestic workers and black, indigenous and *quilombola* women. The Country Office embodied a model of change oriented towards structural impact that will only be validated in the long run. There was nonetheless still scope for stronger mainstreaming of age and disability perspectives into these portfolios, which were absent with the exception of one joint programme.

RECOMMENDATION 4.

Build on the Country Office track record of programming the leave no one behind principle with a stronger focus in the next Strategic Note on intersecting types of vulnerability.

Related actions for consideration by the Country Office:

- Incorporate into project design more explicit criteria for identifying the most marginalized women as primary target groups for transformative change. This means to continue focusing on the seven groups defined as leave no one behind priorities in the previous Strategic Note,⁹⁴ but also to include other social groups that are being left behind, such as people with disabilities and LGBTQI+.
- With Regional Office support, apply best practices and policies for the implementation of the leave no one behind principle across the rest of the project life cycle (e.g., partnership selection, data collection and strategy, results monitoring and reporting).
- Invest in the production and user-friendly dissemination of data disaggregated by gender, race, ethnicity and age, seeking to fill data gaps with potential for driving advocacy and promoting social awareness on target issues.
- Use the leave no one behind principle for new project selection and agree with partners on how to best define the criterion in project design.

Priority **MEDIUM** Timeframe **SHORT-TERM**

⁹⁴ Afrodescendant women; quilombola women; rural women; indigenous women; women human-rights defenders; migrant, asylum seeker and refugee women; young women.

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

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



220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017, USA
Tel: 212-906-6400
Fax: 212-906-6705

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