

# ZIMBABWE COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION (2016-21)

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## Country portfolio description

The 2016-2021 portfolio aimed to support gender equality and women's empowerment through:

- **Increasing gender inclusivity in policies, development programs and service delivery**, through designing and implementing laws, policies, and strategies to promote women's participation in decision-making and Increasing Women Political Empowerment.
- **Increasing women's economic empowerment**, through removing financing barriers, increasing women's capacity, agricultural productivity, and land tenure.
- **Ending violence against women and girls**, through supporting an enabling legislative and policy environment, favorable social norms, attitudes and behavior, and empowerment of women and girls to access essential services.

UN Women implemented a total of 89 projects. Of these, 19 contributed to increasing gender inclusivity, five to economic empowerment and 26 to ending violence. 40 projects contributed to increasing operating effectiveness and efficiency.

## Evaluation overview

The evaluation serves to strengthen accountability and guide the implementation of the new strategic note. The evaluation applied the criteria of: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Human rights and Gender equality. Data was collected at the national level, and through two case studies in the Hurungwe and Tsvingwe districts.

## Key achievements

The portfolio contributed to:

### *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)*

- Strengthening women's organizations to advocate for reform of marriage laws and to enhance response to VAWG and convictions of perpetrators.
- Construction of a Gender Responsive Safe market with 96 secure well-lit stalls, children's play area and resting room, and ablution, water and sanitation facilities to bring change towards VAWG in public spaces.

### *Women's Economic Empowerment*

- Institutionalizing gender responsive budgeting and data availability to inform financial sector gender inclusion.

### *Women's Political Participation*

- Strengthening electoral process, leading to increased women participation in the 2018 elections.
- Strengthening women MPs to effectively participate in parliament and advance women's priorities.

### *UN coordination*

- The development of the Gender Mainstreaming strategy for the United Nations Country Team and supported agencies with gender mainstreaming.

### *Normative*

- Supporting development of policies, strategies and laws that promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, and national reporting against international and regional commitments.
- Supporting the government to develop *The National Gender Policy*, covering all three thematic areas.

## Conclusions

### RELEVANCE

1. UN Women has positioned itself as an effective technical adviser and funder on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Zimbabwe.
2. More could have been done to strengthen the gender machinery, underpinned by an analysis of the capacity needs.
3. There were some misconceptions of the role of UN women. Due to resource constraints, the Country Office has prioritized delivering catalytic, pilot approaches that can be scaled by others.
4. UN Women has flexibly responded to changing contexts. It has employed flexible implementation mechanisms.

### EFFICIENCY

5. UN Women's management structure in Zimbabwe was appropriate for the context and scale of operation. Due to inadequate funding, it has been difficult for UN Women to access the necessary skills, knowledge and capacities as relevantly required to deliver its portfolio.
6. UN Women positioned itself well to mobilise financial resources in a constrained funding environment. It used different financial instruments to reduce risk, improve efficiency and ensure accountability.
7. There is opportunity to strengthen results-based management, knowledge management and communications.

### EFFECTIVENESS

8. Implementation has leaned towards operational work. Nonetheless by the end of the strategic period UN Women was putting in place measures to strengthen its coordination mandate.

### SUSTAINABILITY

9. To facilitate sustainability, the country office built national ownership and developed frameworks and policies. The evaluation found strong evidence of national ownership and the presence of champions. In some cases, funding ran out without an exit strategy, affecting sustainability of capacity development.
10. UN Women has effectively piloted approaches which are being scaled. UN Women can strengthen its strategy to support scale up of its pilots.

### HUMAN RIGHTS and GENDER EQUALITY

11. The portfolio was delivered in line with Human

Rights, Gender Equality, and participatory principles. The portfolio reached women, but lagged with people with disabilities, boys and men, and young people.

## Lessons learned

The evaluation identified the following lessons with significance beyond the program:

**1** Partnerships are more effective when they are: 1) long-term; 2) intentional about what all partners want to achieve; and 3) well defined to avoid misunderstanding.

**2** Use of different modes of financial management facilities, such as direct implementation modality and disbursement of grants through Partner Cooperation Agreements can enable UN Women to manage national financial regulations, minimize forex risk and support program implementation in a way that complies with internal policies.

**3** Innovative operational practices such as using team-based programming and strengthening knowledge management systems can mitigate some of the challenges of high staff turnover.

## Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION 1:

Improve joint support on strengthening the gender machinery in the country.

### RECOMMENDATION 2:

Strengthen partnership with the MWACSMED by instituting joint work plan reviews

### RECOMMENDATION 3:

Strengthen communication with stakeholders on its strategic approach

### RECOMMENDATION 4:

Strengthen UN Women's response to humanitarian crises with significant gender concern.

### RECOMMENDATION 5:

Strengthen quality of technical support by experts to partners.

### RECOMMENDATION 6:

Strengthen partnerships and continuity of initiatives in key institutions.