Final Evaluation
"Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning (SCE) Programme"
Final version, January 2024

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UN WOMEN

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ACRONYMS

AWO	Arab Women's Organization
BONET	Big Steps Outreach Network
CEMEX	Cementos Mexicanos
CO	Country Office
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GNI	Gross National Income
GTLS	Gender Transformative Life Skills
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	International Labour Organization
INE	National Statistics Institute
IP/RP	Implementing Partner /Responsible Party
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LNOB	Leaving no one behind
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MINPROFF	Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family
MINEFOP	Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OBA	Outcome Based Approach
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PRADAN	Professional Assistance for Development Action
SCE	Second Chance Education and Vocational Training
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEPICJ	Servicio de Promoción Integral Comunitario Juvenil
SHG	Self-Help Groups
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHRC	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNW	UN Women
WEP	Women Economic Principles
VTEC	Vocational Training and Employment Centre
VUCA	Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The main purpose of this independent evaluation was to assess relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of Phase I of the Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning (SCE) Programme to provide evidence and learning to consolidate achievements in the six pilot countries, nourish replication and scaling-up efforts, and guide the design of Phase II of the Programme. Particular attention was given to assess the transformative nature of the Programme. In addition to the four evaluation criteria, the evaluation gathered best practices and innovations to inspire future actions.

The evaluation combined a summative and a formative approach. Its conclusions and practical recommendations draw on 16 key evidence-based findings and aim to support UN Women's strategic decision-making towards future work expanding second chance education and vocational training opportunities for most marginalized women.

While the evaluation initially focused on the period ending June 2022, it was agreed to incorporate changes between July 2022 and June 2023 to use updated data, further assess the learning and change-management capacity of the Programme and strengthen the utility-focus of the evaluation.

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation approach was participatory. During the first phase of the evaluation in 2022, fieldwork was conducted in the six pilot countries of the Programme: Australia, Cameroon, Chile, India, Jordan and Mexico. The mixed methods approach included desk review, focus group discussions (FGD), key informant interviews (KII) and additional formal and informal

meetings. A total of 86 FGD and KII were undertaken with women participating in the SCE Programme, implementing partners/responsible parties (IPs/RPs) and other key stakeholders. After data triangulation, a draft report was delivered in August 2022.

The second phase of the evaluation was undertaken in 2023, based on secondary sources (including the 2022 draft report), Programme data analysis, and various consultations with the global and country SCE Programme teams.

Cultural sensitivity and intersectionality were key approaches to address the diversity of the Programme.

METHODOLOGY

01 MIXED METHODS
- Desk Review
- FGDs, Key II
- Remote survey
- Formal and informal meetings
- Internal questionnaires

02 FIELDWORK
- First phase (2022): Six pilot countries (six local consultants).
- Second phase (2023): Secondary sources, Programme data analysis and inputs from SCE teams.

03 ANALYSIS AND REPORTING
- Triangulation
- Internal workshop
- Draft & final reports-feedback

PARTICIPATIVE PROCESS

FOUR EVALUATION CRITERIA
- Relevance
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Sustainability

THE SCE IN BRIEF

UN Women's Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning (SCE) Programme (2018-2024) is a solution for women who have missed out on education. Under a global umbrella, the Programme aimed to develop context specific, affordable and scalable learning, entrepreneurship and employment pathways for empowering the most disadvantaged young and adult women.

At the very core of the Programme is the belief that globally there is a void in addressing the needs of adult women wanting to access livelihood or learning opportunities that increase their access to employment. The Programme supported women with three pathways out of exclusion: 1) re-entry into formal education, 2) vocational education that provides them with a pathway to employment, and 3) entrepreneurship training and skills that support them to start their own business.

THE PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

1. More marginalized women and young women access and benefit from high quality educational content, material and learning pathways

2. More marginalized women and young women benefit from increased employment, livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities.

3. Fewer marginalized women and young women are disadvantaged and denied education opportunities due to harmful and discriminatory social norms.

4. More marginalized women and young women have improved access to education and employment pathways through enhanced multi-sectoral policy and financing frameworks that enabling scaling of successful SCE solutions.

The Programme contributed to unleash the potential of most marginalized women to fully participate and contribute to economic development in six very diverse countries in terms of economic development, governance profiles, social, cultural and political realities, and gender indicators:

- **Chile, India and Mexico:** Low and middle-income countries with high poverty pockets.
- **Cameroon and Jordan:** In conflict, displacement and crisis settings countries.

- **Australia:** Developed context with marginalized indigenous and refugee women.

In 2018 the BHP Foundation provided full funding for the Programme implementation in Australia, Mexico, Chile and India; additional funding was mobilized by Un Women afterwards. Cameroon and Jordan received seed funding to strengthen their existing LEAP and Oasis programmes and bring them under the SCE umbrella.

CONTEXT

Across the globe, women face fewer income opportunities compared to men. The lack of investment to provide access to quality adult education and learning opportunities for women has detrimental knock-on effects like a declining global women's labour force participation rate. Women are less likely to participate in the labour market, and when they do, they are paid less and are less likely to work in formal employment. In 2022, gender parity in the labour force stood at 62.9%, the lowest level registered since 2006. In 2023 it increased to 64%. Women who want to work have a far harder time finding a job than men and have also fewer opportunities for business expansion or career progression. Among people aged 25 to 54, the gender gap in labour force participation stood at 29.2 percentage points in 2022, with female participation at 61.4% and male participation at 90.6%.Many other factors contribute to the "gender jobs gap": the disproportionate gender distribution of care and domestic work (for those in the same 25 to 54 age group with at least one child under six, the labour force participation gap widens from 29.2 to 42.6 percentage points, with female participation at 53.1% and male participation at 95.7%), women having fewer choices in their own movements, and the social norms that condition the patters and opportunities of economic participation of women, including usually more discontinuous pathways and less access to higher-paying income opportunities.

Only 1 in 3 businesses have female participation in ownership (33%). In the last decade, the exclusion of women from the digital world has shaved $1 trillion from the gross domestic product of low- and middle-income countries. Without action, this loss will grow to 1.5 trillion 2025. Women also have less access to credit, are less likely to use banks, and have less collateral to grow a business.

The diversity of the six countries purposely selected to participate in the Programme is expressed in multiple dimensions and indicators, including their positions in the Economic Participation and Opportunity Subindex, that includes 146 countries. It is important to note that these positions do not evidence internal disparities, poverty pockets and marginalized groups, which are the SCE Programme target populations.

COUNTRY POSITIONS IN THE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION AND OPPORTUNITY SUBINDEX

- Australia: 38
- Cameroon: 66
- Chile: 105
- Mexico: 113
- Jordan: 126
- India: 143

FINDINGS

The evaluation found that the SCE is fully aligned with and relevant to the UN Women priorities, contributes to the 2030 Agenda and its mandate to "leave no one behind", and is also aligned to global commitments to women's rights, gender equality and women's economic empowerment (**Finding 1).** Though less explicit and visible, it is also aligned with regional commitments that uphold gender equality. The Programme remains aligned and

relevant to the new 2022-2025 UN Women Strategic priorities which include women's economic empowerment.

Programme evidence, including the in-progress individual country Signature Features and results, show that the Programme and its Theory of Change (ToC) are a relevant framework to implement in very diverse contexts and with different population groups, within the participating countries and beyond (**Finding 2**). Coordination, standardized guidelines, knowledge products and applied surveys contributed to maintain the Programme coherence and sense-giving connections, while embracing country adaptations and COVID-19 responses. Implementation went in some cases beyond ToC strategies (e.g. addressing positive masculinities in Mexico and Cameroon).

The Programme responds to the increasing global need to boost women's economic empowerment, offering a unique, non-formal alternative that addresses diversity and enables different pathways to offer most disadvantaged women SCE (**Finding 3**). However, while data shows progress in the prioritization of most marginalized groups, there is a need to further ensure consistent focus on the most disadvantaged segments.

> **Data from July 2023 compared to data in from January 2022:**
>
> - 38% of female beneficiaries had no income, compared to 22%.
> - 50% of beneficiaries lived in a rural or semi-urban location, compared to 39%.
>
> In addition, July 2023 data shows that 32% of women recognized themselves as indigenous.

The period from the SCE retreat (October 2022) until the end of the evaluation period marked a crucial stage of consolidation for the SCE Programme. Efforts at global and country level were prioritized to enhance standardization and address quality issues that influenced effectiveness (**Finding 5**). Highlights include several knowledge products and the global retreat that led to the creation of the MEL working group. The Programme was able to strengthen its monitoring and reporting mechanisms, including shared definitions and the creation of the post-graduate survey, a very important milestone to measure programme outcomes over time. FGDs qualitative data and recent survey results demonstrate women's transformations in areas such as self-confidence, agency, self-reliance and control over all personal decisions. However, there is still room for improvement to capture gender transformative changes (**Finding 6**). The presence of a ToC in the design document is a crucial tool to assess effectiveness and guide a results-oriented adaptive management. However, its utilization to guide M&E, management and decision-making was limited during implementation (**Finding 4**).

Performance at global level has reached most targets and can be assessed as highly satisfactory. By June 2023, enrolled learners represented 98% of the defined target; 73% of the enrolled women graduated, making it a total of 48.156, 138% of the target. The Programme has achieved its Outcome 2 target related to the generation of economic opportunities, but evidence is limited to understand the extent to which marginalized women have benefited from increased employment, livelihoods and entrepreneurial opportunities as a result of the implementation of the Programme, and to address the transformational implications of such opportunities in their lives. Results related to policies and government capacities are also positive. Based on results achieved, the mentoring strategy is still a challenging one for all countries (**Findings 8 & 9**).

Country level results present significant variations, over- and under achievements. The impact of COVID-19 is also very country-specific. Consequently, global aggregated data and averages can lead to misleading conclusions. The range of results at country level alerts about the need to revise the country selection criteria, process and assumptions; analyse the capacity of the Programme to design and address national diversity in terms of outcome and output-oriented performance, revise indicators that may not be relevant at least for some countries, and the need to further ensure clarity and comparability beyond context specificities, something already undertaken in the latest logframe (**Findings 7-9).**

Countries report successfully about efforts and achievements related to Outcomes 3 and 4. However, available data does not to fully endorse the relevance and contribution of the results to Programme effectiveness so far in relation to Outcomes 1 and 2 (**Finding 10**). It is important to consider that while significant improvements are evidenced in relation to policy dialogues, in 2023 only Chile and India reported budget-related results.

The number of learners following life skills courses (78864) has evidenced their relevance for women and transformational potential. In response to this trend, SCE has turned this into a Signature Feature called Gender Transformative Life Skills, already tested both in Chile and Mexico during Phase I, and which is expected to be a foundational mandatory component included in any of the pathways during Phase II.

Expenditure and efficiency are in general positive. The use of financial resources as indicated by budget expenditures suggests more efficiency in achieving Outcome 1, followed by Outcome 2, and to a lesser extent Outcomes 3 and 4 **(Finding 11)**. This is positive impact as it shows the high financial resource were utilization for programming purpose than spending on staff and project management cost. Financial expenditure and advance liquidation of expenditures of partners contract differ at country level and have restrictions to align to outcome and output-based expenditure. Commitment, quality and high performance of the Programme teams were crucial to determine the Programme success and mitigated the impact of staff turnover on continuity and implementation. The pandemic played an important role in slowing down the implementation, achievements and financial delivery levels.

A simplified analysis based on existing data shows that unit costs per graduate reflect important differences in countries (**Finding 12**). The Phase II of the Programme needs to revise the current strategy to ensure a coherent combination of the leave no one behind approach with value for money and enhance its competitiveness. Further leveraging is needed to strengthen successful efficiency.

EXAMPLES OF LEVERAGING AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES:

Australia: IP/RPs raising funds on their own.
India: Co-financing model with CSO to implement trainings.
India: On-the-job training in the private sector.
Mexico: Partnerships with local governments for local demand-based training.

While advancements in Programme validation and consolidation are important, sustainability still faces important challenges (**Finding 13).** Countries have adapted and validated the various pathways and have implemented partnership strategies with diverse stakeholders and variable results. Less emphasis has been given to the private sector, that can present yet less
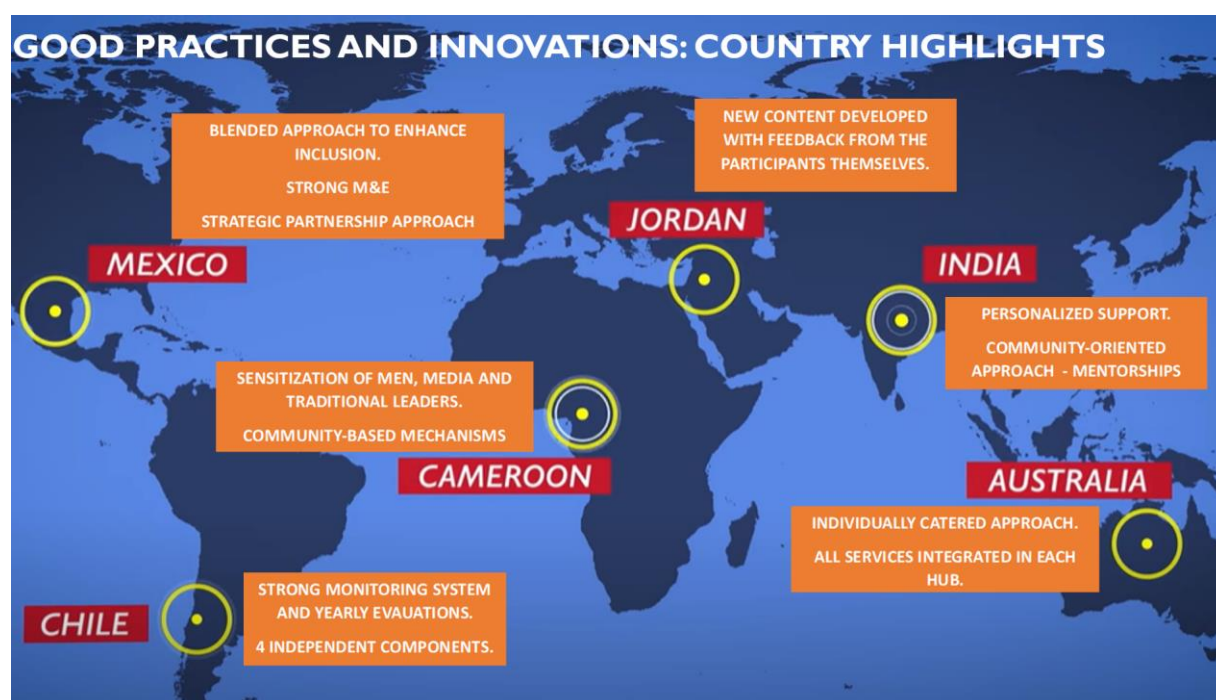
unexplored opportunities (**Finding 14).** A few countries have moved successfully towards policy influence and integration. Improvements in terms of learning, systematization, communication materials, and the ongoing initiative to develop country Signature Features, will enhance data-based replicability and scalability potential of the Programme. It is important to highlight that efficiency and value for money are key criteria for replication and scaling-up and that leveraging and blended financial strategies need to be strengthened towards the future.

BEST PRACTICES, INNOVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Countries have learnt and matured during Programme implementation (**Finding 15**). Exchange and learning between countries increased during the last period, but there is still room to enhance systematic cross-fertilization, strengthen global learning and capitalization of best practices and innovations.

Despite these limitations, countries offer valuable innovations and good practices that range from male involvement and sensitization to strong community involvement and leveraging of existing resources. The design of Phase II and the revision of the ToC should bring these contextualized practices to the discussion table. Fine-tuning and systematization will also allow potential replication in other similar contexts.

GOOD PRACTICES AND INNOVATIONS: COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

MEXICO — BLENDED APPROACH TO ENHANCE INCLUSION. STRONG M&E. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

JORDAN — NEW CONTENT DEVELOPED WITH FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS THEMSELVES.

INDIA — PERSONALIZED SUPPORT. COMMUNITY-ORIENTED APPROACH - MENTORSHIPS

CAMEROON — SENSITIZATION OF MEN, MEDIA AND TRADITIONAL LEADERS. COMMUNITY-BASED MECHANISMS

AUSTRALIA — INDIVIDUALLY CATERED APPROACH. ALL SERVICES INTEGRATED IN EACH HUB.

CHILE — STRONG MONITORING SYSTEM AND YEARLY EVAUATIONS. 4 INDEPENDENT COMPONENTS.

Piloting, maturation and consolidation of the Programme also implied constant learning, innovating and introducing best practices to enhance the role of the global level and its contribution to the Programme (**Finding 16).** Throughout the Programme implementation, and even despite important challenges, the Global Level progressively gained clarity and strengthened its strategic guiding role. Its contribution was key in supporting and monitoring country work, developing global guidance and tools towards standardization, producing knowledge products, generating data and innovative approaches towards the future.

Important lessons learned by the Programme include the following:

- Evidence-based local solutions and key partnerships play a vital role for successful adaptations.
- Over and under-achievements can both reflect design and implementation issues.
- The prioritization of most marginalized groups needs to be realistic and verifiable.
- Life skills have highest demand among most marginalized women and are central – not complementary - to transform women's lives.
- Aligning the financial reporting systems is key to ensure that expenditures can be clearly attributed to outcomes and outputs.

CONCLUSION

The Programme is a relevant, unique and effective model to tackle marginalized women educational and employment needs from a global though country-sensitive perspective. Its continuity should be integrated into the strategic planning of UN Women.

- The Programme is highly relevant to address the education and employment disadvantages of the most marginalized women, aggravated due to COVID-19. Focus on most marginalized women, excluding young women in the definition of the beneficiaries, and revising priority countries based on their achievements, needs and potentialities (e.g. Australia), is endorsed by the evaluation team.

- There is a need to revise the existing Theory of Change to strengthen its alignment with experience-based learning, enhance its gender transformative potential and improve its technical consistency to increase it utility as an adaptive management tool.

- Improvements to standardization, institutionalization and cross-fertilization still need for additional global guidelines and frameworks (e.g. for strategic alliances) and for a structured, systematic learning and knowledge management strategy.

- The level of achievement presents significant country variations, which is particularly relevant since targets are tailored for each country reality. COVID-19 also had a variable impact on country performance.

- While experience has validated the importance of social and cultural enabling environments, the definition of Outcome 3 seems quite ambitious and the related outputs and indicators are not very strong. This Outcome also opens the discussion on whether the Programme should promote positive masculinities to support gender transformative change.

- Creating enabling policy and legal conditions is a fundamental component of the Programme, its transformative potential, and is a condition towards sustainability and scalability. This indicator could not be found in the latest logframe; while the challenge of influencing budget allocation is clear, removing the indicator is considered a setback given the importance of budget allocation to really install any changes and ensure implementation.

- Overachievements in Outcomes 1 and to a lesser extent in Outcome 2, have also implied over-spending in the corresponding budgets. Budget execution in relation to Outcomes 3 and 4 is characterized by a notable variability. A simple calculation of the unit cost per learner evidenced enormous differences that alert about the need to further take into consideration value for money criteria and enhance efficiency in the locations with higher costs.

- Conditions for sustainability in terms of continuity of processes and results, replication and scaling-up are on the way but not fully in place yet. While in general the SCE Programme model was validated and is highly relevant, there are important aspects for further improvement, including potential changes in the role of the Programme vis-a-vis increased strategic focus on leveraging local strategic partners. Positive sustainability pillars are in place to build upon in a Phase II.

- The pilot phase enabled the Programme to learn and strengthen its initial global approach, while investing in the development of six country-specific responses and potential models. Dedication and high-quality performance of the Programme staff were key for success. Experience and learning need to be further systematized – at global and country level- to inform future decisions and nourish the revision of the ToC and strategic framework, to increase replicability and scalability potential at all levels. Based on the evaluation, two key issues require particular attention towards the future: effective transformation of women's lives and maximized value for money.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation has found that the SCE Programme is a robust model for improving the wellbeing and economic empowerment of the most marginalized women. On this basis, the design, financing and implementation of Phase II is highly recommended.

1. **Based on Phase I experiences and future projections, UN Women should update the Programme Theory of Change for Phase II.**

- Develop explicit country-level adaptations of the global ToC.
- Align the Programme ToC with the global and country-level Signature Features and local ToCs.
- Reflect all additional and complementary validated strategies to strengthen the relevance and transformational approach, including women's empowerment and agency, and positive masculinities.
- Review the conceptual consistency and validity of the assumptions.
- Analyse the viability of the ToC in specific contexts to guide country selection for Phase II.

2. **UN Women should strengthen the focus of the Programme on marginalized groups with an intersectional approach.**

- Based on global guidelines and criteria, revise and simplify the country beneficiary profiles and their consistency.

- Develop guidelines to operationalize an intersectional approach in the definition, selection and targeting of most marginalized groups.
- Validate the capacity of the Programme to ensure targeting these specific population groups and reporting consequently.
- Develop linkages with regional programmes and commitments.

3. **UN Women should integrate a fully expanded socio-ecological approach into the Theory of Change and M&E system.**

- Identify key changes and enabling conditions at different levels (individual, couples, family, community, society) and their interrelations.
- Based on a partnerships' strategy, identify key stakeholders and partners that can contribute to generate changes and enabling conditions outside the direct scope of the Programme.
- Develop a joint monitoring and learning framework with key stakeholders and partners.

4. **UN Women should continue strengthening the strategic roles and contribution of the global level.**

- For Phase II, review current outcomes and outputs, paying particular attention to changes needed in social norms and harmful practices.
- Define realistic though significant global and country targets.
- Integrate impact measurement to strengthen evidence and accountability related to transformative changes in women's lives related to their participation in the SCE Programme (e.g. enhanced attention and care of their health and wellbeing, more equitable distribution of care work in the households, greater recognition by their partners).
- Continue generating guidelines to standardize key aspects and ensure minimum standards.
- Based on existing knowledge products and previous experience, develop a forward-looking KM strategy, that focuses on harmonizing and institutionalizing documentation, systematization and learning.
- Despite acknowledged limitations in existing institutional systems, ToC should be used to guide periodic monitoring and adaptive management.

5. **Un Women should integrate a value for money approach in Programme decision-making, management and M&E.**

- Develop or adapt a value for money framework for the Programme.
- Integrate value for money analysis in M&E.
- Clearly define value for money ranges combined with LNOB criteria, to select new countries.
- Review the data and strategies of high-cost Phase I countries.
- Develop creative alternatives to increase efficiency and value for money.

6. **Un Women should leverage capacities and resources from other stakeholders to move to a more efficient and sustainable model.**

- Analyse the possibility of moving towards a more efficient (and also more sustainable) "light-touch/leverage model", consolidating the role of local, qualified partners as implementers based on best practices and lessons learned so far.
- Systematically map and analyse existing institutions and initiatives that could be leveraged.
- Learn from previous leveraging initiatives and good practices.
- Analyse the impact on efficiency & value for money of leveraging partnerships.

7. **UN Women needs to enhance the sustainability potential of the Programme.**

- Develop a sustainability strategy for Phase II to address: i) continuity; ii) replication; iii) scaling-up.
- Support countries in the current development of their sustainability plans.
- Develop structured transfer guidelines and methodologies for replication and scaling-up process.
- Develop blended financial models for Phase II and innovative resource mobilization strategies.
- Analyse the impact on efficiency & value for money of leveraging partnerships.

8. **UN Women should strengthen the positioning of the Programme and its capacity to attract traditional and new partners.**

- Strengthen the storytelling of the Programme, share showcase success stories and data.
- Convene actors and sectors globally and regionally to further position the Programme and its value added, discuss key political and strategic issues that influence women's economic empowerment, and establish joint commitments and a shared agenda.
- Identify and approach new global, regional and country-level strategic partners (private sector, UN agencies).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

Aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Women's Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning (SCE) Programme is a solution for women who have missed out on education. Under a global umbrella, the Programme aims to develop context-specific, affordable and scalable learning, entrepreneurship and employment pathways for empowering the most disadvantaged young and adult women. It offers young and adult women, their families, local communities and societies the benefits of access to educational services, which are tailored not only to their needs as learners, but also to their future as earners. The Programme contributes to unleash the potential of women, half of the population, to contribute to economic development.

In its Phase I, the Programme is piloted in Australia, Cameroon, Chile, India, Jordan, and Mexico. The six countries selected to participate in the pilot project share a common interest in, and need for a solution for women who have missed out on education, they represent a very diverse range of national economic levels, governance profiles, social, cultural, political diversity, and stability and gender equity indicators.

The BHP Foundation provided full funding for the Programme implementation in Australia, Mexico, Chile and India, and seed funding for Cameroon and Jordan, where additional funding was mobilized.

As was well expressed in the early 2020 Mid-Term Review (MTR), this is a "Global Programme with Local Solutions", a slogan that encapsulates the multi-faceted nature of SCE. There is a strong underpinning fundamental objective: to support the most disadvantaged adult women to re-enter education or the work force, providing choices and possibilities and valuable skills for them to be able to create a future for themselves through economic empowerment and self-reliance. However, this concept takes fundamentally different shapes according to each context.

The SCE Programme is now in its fifth year of the innovative pilot Phase I, including a 12-month costed-extension (June 2020-June 2021) due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Programme implementation, a second non-cost extension until December 2023 and a final already approved non-cost extension until December 2024.

UN Women is currently planning the design of a five-year Phase II of the SCE Programme to transition the successful components of the Programme to sustainable scale by integration into institutional and policy frameworks in the initial pilot countries, mobilizing resources for scale up by other stakeholders including by governments, as well as continuing to expand the use of the model geographically through new UN Women Country Offices adopting it into their strategic note in both humanitarian and development contexts. UN Women continues to engage potential new partners (traditional and non-traditional). With the final evaluation of SCE Phase I, partly carried out in 2022 and continued during 2023 to deliver this report, UN

Women aimed at consolidating evidence-base of the SCE global model to provide potential new donors the necessary justification to invest in Phase II.

1.2. Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope

The main purpose of the evaluation is to assess the **relevance, effectiveness**, **efficiency** and **sustainability** of the SCE pilot implementation, to provide evidence and learning that will strengthen the contribution and sustainability of work undertaken so far in the six pilot countries, and will also nourish the design of a five-year Phase II of the SCE Programme, with focus on replication and scaling up[1].

Considering the pilot nature of Phase I, it is important to assess to what extent the Programme with its improvements and adaptations today, represents a validated model and approach to respond to country-specific women education and vocational realities and needs under a global Programme, its uniqueness, comparative advantages and transformative potential.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are[2]:

- Evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Programme, as a whole and taking into consideration the diverse contexts where it was implemented-
- Capture and analyse best practices, innovations and lessons learned.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations to: i) strengthen and consolidate achievements in the six pilot countries; ii) nourish replication and scaling up efforts; iii) guide the design of the Phase II proposal.

Given that the MTR in 2020 provided important recommendations to strengthen the Programme, this final evaluation will analyse the extent to which these recommendations were implemented[3] at global and country level.

The evaluation assesses the global level of the Programme, considering its specific role and contribution, and covers the six pilot countries where the Programme was implemented: Australia, Cameroon, Chile, India, Jordan and Mexico. However, it is important to note that this is a global evaluation nourished with the experiences, results and other inputs of the implementing countries, but does not imply an in-depth evaluation of the Programme implementation in each and every country.

While the evaluation focused on the period ending June 2022, given the time passed and considering the ongoing Programme extension, it was agreed that the 2023 evaluation team would also consider changes that happened between July 2022 and June 2023. This would enrich the evaluation with updated data, further assess the learning and change management capacity of the Programme particularly after the 2022 SCE Global retreat and strengthen the utility-focus of the evaluation.

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[1] The concepts of "replication" and "scaling up" are closely related and frequently confused; it is important to understand their definitions and differences. "Put simply: something replicable can be copy-pasted (with variations as needed) to grow impact linearly in relation to effort and cost. Something scalable can create impact at a rate that increases faster than the rate at which your effort and costs increase." https://echoinggreen.org/news/are-you-scalable-or-replicable/. For example, a Phase II would probably imply a combination of replication and scaling up.

[2] Defined by the 2023 evaluation team.

[3] It is clear that according to UN Women norms, the MTR did not require a formal management response.

1.3. Evaluation approach, criteria and evaluation questions
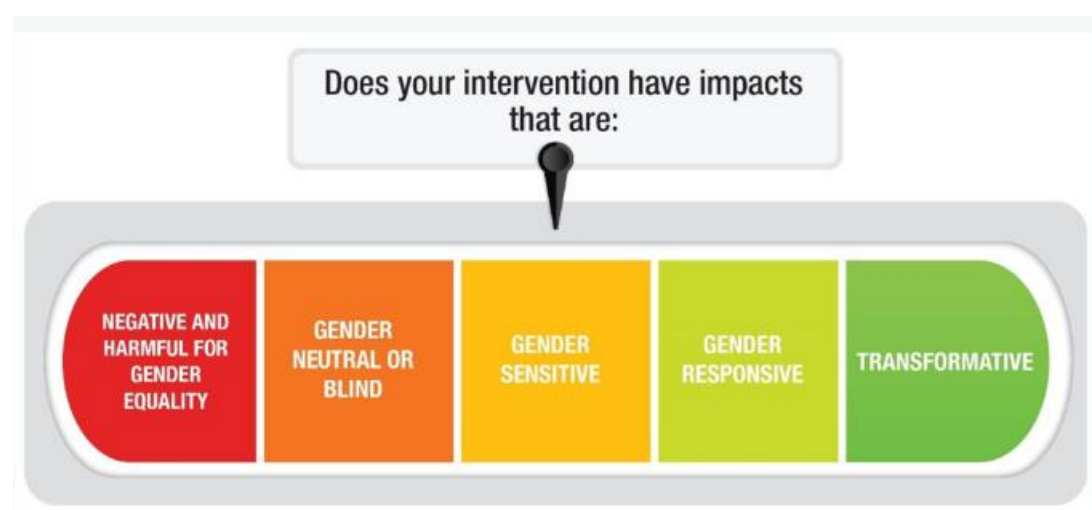
1.3.1. Evaluation approaches

As a final independent evaluation, a **summative approach** was combined with a **formative** one; while the first is focused on measuring the overall achievements of the Programme, the second integrates a learning-oriented perspective, which adds value particularly in sight of a potential Phase II. Thus, this evaluation is not only understood as an accountability exercise, but also as a learning process, based on the involvement, perspectives and feedback of multiple stakeholders.

The evaluation had a **participatory approach**, involving key stakeholders, internal and external, at local, national and global level and including fieldwork during its first phase in 2022. During the 2023 phase, participation was internal and involved the global and country teams.

Based on its purpose and objectives, the evaluation had from the beginning to the end, a strong **utility-focused** approach, meaning that the main interest is to provide relevant, accessible and useful evidence, analysis and recommendations that will be used to guide future decision-making.

The evaluation gave central priority to the effective and consistent integration of a **gender** approach. The evaluation process prioritized listening to the voice to the women participants in the different countries during the 2022 fieldwork; on the other hand, the evaluative analysis presented in this report aims ultimately to respond to which extent the Programme was gender transformative. According to the OECD, "prioritizing gender equality in development context is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. But to make sure the impact of efforts is truly sustainable requires that imbalances in power relations between men and women are addressed, as well as the visible and invisible structures and norms that uphold these inequalities. This is what we call transformative change."[4]

Illustration 1-1: Transformative changes on gender equality

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4   https://oecd-development-matters.org/2022/05/30/what-is-transformative-change-for-gender-equality-and-how-do-we-achieve-it/

Cultural sensitivity and **intersectionality**, on the other hand, were two key approaches to address the diversity of the Programme and the six realities it embraced during its pilot phase. **Cultural sensitivity** focused on analysing the extent to which the country interventions were effective in adopting and adapting the Programme to the specific situations and needs of the prioritized marginalized groups. Important to mention that while gender-transformative change implies cultural change, cultural sensitivity enables a deep understanding of gender relations, norms and power structures in a particular context, to tailor gender-transformative strategies that embrace the positive aspects and values of traditions and cultural worldviews.

An **intersectional** approach allowed an understanding of the diversity of marginalized women groups that participated in the Programme, considering the intersecting social identities of groups and individuals that aggravate and add complexity to gender-based disadvantages and marginalization. To achieve transformative change for gender equality, development policies and practice need to promote the rights and inclusion of all women considering their diversity and also existing inequalities among women.

The Programme design document includes a **Theory of Change** (ToC); while this approach was not included in the first phase of the evaluation, the analysis will address the extent to which the ToC was used to inform strategic-adaptive management during the implementation. A related **realist** approach will also help understand what happened, how it happened and why it happened. In other words, realist evaluations searches for the underlying factors that explain how the results were achieved and the influence of the context, and thus contribute to understand "what works and why" under certain circumstances.

Finally, it is important to emphasize the **pilot** nature of the Programme being evaluated. A pilot initiative is usually an opportunity open to experimentation, innovation, higher risks and failure; pilot initiatives invest in experience-based evidence to develop replicable and scalable models, thus value particularly the capacity to learn, adapt and generate solutions in the process responding also to unexpected situations. The diverse nature of the countries where the Programme was implemented was a great opportunity to pilot in different contexts; the evaluation will address the capacity of the Programme at global and national level, to learn and use lessons learned, adapt, manage change and respond timely and proactively to new challenges.
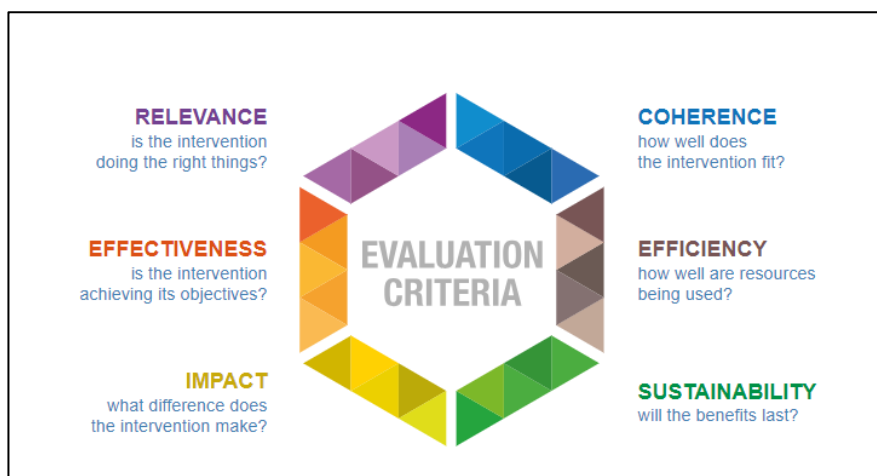
1.3.2. Evaluation criteria and questions

As previously mentioned, four evaluation criteria were prioritized for the evaluation: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability**, according to the definitions of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)[5]:

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[5] https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm

Illustration 1-2: Evaluation Criteria

Source: Evaluation Criteria (OCDE).

Impact was not included as an evaluation criteria for this exercise, although the question about the difference the intervention is making somehow underlies the evaluation analysis and there is some evidence, particularly gathered during the 2022-2023 period that illustrates some transformational changes.

In addition to the four evaluation criteria, the evaluation gathered best practices, innovations and lessons learned, to expand the evidence and particularly inform future replication and scaling up efforts.

The table below includes the specific evaluation questions defined for each of the four criteria, while the evaluation matrix with assumptions/hypothesis and indicators for each evaluation question can be found in annex 1.

Table 1-1: Evaluation Questions

RELEVANCE
EQ1. Are the SCE Programme design and objectives relevant to the UN Women priorities and in meeting the needs and aspirations of the target population of marginalized and young women?
EFFECTIVENESS
EQ2. To what extent has the SCE Programme reached its planned objectives and desired outcomes: i) re-entry into formal education, ii) vocational education that provides them with a pathway to employment, and iii) entrepreneurship training and skills that support them to start their own business?
EQ3. To what extent has the Programme contributed to create an enabling environment in terms of social norms, financing, legislations and policy frameworks, to achieve the expected objectives and outcomes?
EFFICIENCY
EQ4. To which extent has the Programme made good use of its human, financial and administrative resources, taking into account the specific contexts and working conditions, including COVID-19?
SUSTAINABILITY
EQ5. Are the results of the Programme sustainable, replicable and scalable?
BEST PRACTICES, INNOVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED
EQ6. Which where the best practices, innovations and lessons learned from the pilot phase and how did they influence Programme design and implementation since midst 2022?

1.4. Evaluation methodology and data sources

During the first phase of the evaluation in 2022, fieldwork was conducted in the six pilot countries of the Programme with the support of six local consultants. The consultants were contracted locally to support research and translation. Where possible, preference was given to female consultants with the technical capacity to independently conduct focus group meetings with women's groups; this ensured that participants were comfortable to respond more freely (all consultants had experience and history of social research, and M&E).

The mixed methods approach included Desk Review[6], Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant Interviews (KII) and additional formal and informal meetings. Based on consultations with the SCE Global Programme Manager, and SCE Country Project Managers, the main stakeholder groups for the evaluation were women participating in the SCE Programme, Implementing Partners/Responsible Parties (IPs/RPs), NGOs, government partners, donors and private sector representatives. The following table shows the number of activities undertaken in each country.

Table 1-2: Number of FGDs and KIIs conducted globally[7]

	FGD Graduates	FGD Fac/mentors	FGD UNW Staff/consultants	FGD IPs/Sub IPS	KII UNW/ consult	KII Gov	KII Private Sect	KII IPs/ Sub IPs
Australia	3	1		2	1	2	2	2
Cameroon	3	2		3	1	1		
Chile			1		1			5
India	6	2	2	3	4	5		4
Jordan	3		1		2	1		2
Mexico	4	2	1	2	4	6	2	3
TOTAL	**19**	**7**	**5**	**10**	**10**	**15**	**4**	**16**

Source: 2022 Draft Evaluation Report, with some corrections introduced by county teams.

Additionally, the 2022 team developed remote survey tools[8] for graduate feedback in Kobo format[9], to assess satisfaction with the Programme as well as capacity of the Programme to link graduates to employment. Given the number of unanswered questions on this survey and its results, and its limited outreach according to some country reports, the 2023 team decided not to use it and to rely its analysis on Programme data.

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[6] Desk review of relevant literature provided by SCE, including:
- Programme documents, including full country strategies and action plans, progress reports (quarterly, annual) and knowledge products.
- Relevant background documents collected during project design and implementation. Particularly any country policy documents, and sector strategies relevant to SCE design and implementation.
- SCE Assessment tools, M&E protocols, and related data generated by the country programmes to date, such as baseline study and mid-term review.
- Review of the existing e-portal Kolibri (data analytics and documents) and plans to transition to EdApp.

[7] This information was taken from the latest 2022 draft evaluation report and has not been validated by the 2023 team, but country observations to the data were considered. Important to note that other observations like the sampling criteria, could not be responded.

[8] Except for Jordan, considered by the previous evaluation team as a context that does not allow SCE participants to answer the Kobo questions.

[9] Kobo is widely-used, free and open-source software platform enabling data collection in challenging situations, including humanitarian contexts.

After data triangulation, a draft report was delivered in August 2022. The SCE global and country teams provided extensive feedback to the report and the evaluation process was discontinued until 2023, when a new evaluation team took over.

The second phase of the evaluation was undertaken in 2023, based on secondary sources and inputs from the global and country SCE Programme teams. The latest draft report delivered in 2022 by the previous evaluation team was considered one of the sources[10]. To mitigate the weaknesses and limitations of the initial evaluation phase and report, the new evaluation team:

- Analysed, reorganized and reviewed the extensive number of available documents (see references) to better understand the state of the art and facilitate document management and triangulation.
- Reviewed and applied UN Women and other UN evaluation norms, guidelines and quality criteria.
- Carefully defined a set of six evaluation questions.
- Developed and validated with the SCE global and country teams, a clear evaluation matrix with assumptions/hypotheses and corresponding indicators for each evaluation question, to clearly guide the evaluation process (see annex 1).
- Asked for country support in the validation and complementation of a list of key documents to respond to each evaluation criteria and questions.
- Developed and validated with the global team, a detailed evaluation report structure.
- Collected and analysed Programme quantitative and qualitative data, including more recent data (2022-2023) to ensure an updated approach.
- Applied a questionnaire to verify the degree of implementation of the MTR recommendations and the main changes since June 2022.
- Triangulated all available sources to generate draft findings and recommendations.
- Organized a workshop with the global and country teams to review the preliminary findings and recommendations (see annex 2).
- Undertook additional research to complement some aspects/sections not addressed in the 2022 draft report (e.g. on global trends and gender gaps in education and employment).
- Developed a draft evaluation report to be reviewed by all relevant SCE Programme and donor stakeholders.
- Systematized and integrated all feedback in a second evaluation report version for final validation, also including an executive summary.
- Prepared a Power Point Presentation with the main findings and recommendations.
- Presented the findings, conclusions and recommendations to BHP Foundation.
- Delivered the final evaluation report.

In addition, it is important to highlight as a key success factor, the permanent communication with the global and country teams, including periodic update sessions with the global team, bilateral consultations to solve specific questions, and more general consultations. The

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[10] While the second phase of the evaluation was initially conceived as a review and finalization of the existing draft report, a rigorous evaluation of its unsatisfactory quality, which included the systematization of all comments and observations in an audit trail, let to the conclusion that a new, abbreviated evaluation process and corresponding report were needed.

positive, supportive and proactive attitude of the SCE team is to be mentioned, even more considering changes in some country and Programme teams.

1.5. Ethical considerations

Based on the available documents, including the latest delivered 2022 draft evaluation report and country reports, there is no information about how ethics was considered in the initial phase of the evaluation, particularly when implementing the FGDs with women beneficiaries during fieldwork in the different countries.

During the second 2023 evaluation phase no field activities were implemented, so ethical measures were not implemented. The only participative activity was a workshop with the SCE Programme global and country teams to discuss and validate the preliminary findings and recommendations (see annex 2 with the Programme).

1.6. Limitations and mitigation measures

The following table specifically assesses the limitations faced during the second phase of the evaluation and the mitigation measures implemented:

Table 1-3: Limitations and mitigation measures

AREA	ASPECT	RELEVANCE[11]			MITIGATION MEASURES
		L	M	H	
REPORT QUALITY	Latest 2022 draft report with a large number of observations; limited consistency, coherence, clarity, rigor.			X	Started a new analysis and report; used the existing draft as one of the sources and taking into consideration the comments and observations.
EVALUATION QUESTIONS	While questions for each criteria are defined in the inception report, these are not necessarily "evaluation questions" with corresponding assumptions and indicators.			X	Six evaluation questions were defined, with corresponding assumptions/hypothesis and indicators (see attached evaluation matrix)
DOCUMENTS	Very difficult to navigate through the shared folders and understand the logic under which documents were organized; also many versions and duplicated documents.			X	Invested considerable time carefully reviewing the folders and reorganizing the documents. Validated the list of relevant documents per evaluation question with the global and country teams.
DOCUMENTS	2022 country reports not standardized and missing India report.		X		Chile updated its report to include missing information. Information for India gathered from

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[11] Relevance and impact on the evaluation

					other sources ("Contextualizing SCE" document)
DATA	Difficulties navigating through and in some cases fully understanding existing quantitative data, its validity, sources, biases…			X	Bilateral communication with SCE Programme data expert. Included analysis to make such biases visible and ensure relevant recommendations to improve data analysis and reporting. Used latest data reported in 2023 and 2022 dashboards.
DATA	Limited data to evidence transformational change.			X	Integration of recently implemented post graduate surveys in the analysis. Use of quotes/testimonies of recently systematized FGDs.

2. GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXTS

2.1. International data and trends [12]

In May 2018, the International Labour Organization (ILO) published the first-ever global estimates of informal employment. These global estimates show that 61% of all workers worldwide are informally employed—a total of two billion workers (Bonnet et al. 2019:4; ILO 2018:13). They also show that the rate of informal employment is highest in developing countries (at 90%), lowest in developed countries (at 18 per cent), and quite significant in emerging countries (at 67%) (Bonnet et al. 2019:4; ILO 2018:14). Two years later, in late April 2020, the ILO estimated that 1.6 billion people employed in the informal economy—80% of the global informal workforce and nearly half of the total global workforce—could see their livelihoods destroyed due to the decline in work opportunities. Also, formal employment saw a pronounced contraction of labour hours available, and earnings brought on by lockdowns or other restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19, formal and informal employment saw pronounced contraction, even though it was more severe in the informal sector, comprised of own-account work and, to a certain extent, informal salaried jobs. Therefore, it can be deduced that lower income countries, with significantly higher informal employment rates, have suffered proportionally higher income losses for their labour force than the higher income countries.

Since 2020 a growing body of studies on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on informal workers, especially during 2020, has confirmed the ILO prediction. The economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic was different in several regards from other global

[12] Based on analysis included in the 2022 draft report, and enriched with information of the 2022 Global Gender Gap Report.

economic crises. First, the impact was felt first and foremost in the real economy, not the financial economy. Second, the impact was disproportionately felt by the informal workforce who could not work remotely. Findings from a recent study[13] also underscore that the ability of informal workers and their households to recover has been triply constrained by the COVID-19 crisis: their meagre resources were depleted by drawing down or depleting savings and pawning or selling assets to meet basic necessities; they went further into debt by borrowing money for basic necessities (including buying food on credit) and postponing payments (often with compounding interest) of rent, utility bills, and school fees; and they faced continued—if not intensified—restrictions and other punitive measures on their livelihoods, including destruction of their workplaces and infrastructure.

The 2022 Gender Gap Report analyses the gender gaps in labour-market recovery and concludes that "global gender parity for labour force participation had been slowly declining since 2009. However, the trend was exacerbated in 2020, when gender parity scores decreased precipitously over two consecutive editions. As a result, in 2022, gender parity in the labour force stood at 62.9%, the lowest level registered since the index was first compiled. In 2023 gender parity increased to 64% (2023 Global Gender Gap Report:7). Among workers who remained in the labour force, unemployment rates increased and has remained consistently higher for women" (2022 Global Gender Gap Report: 6-7).

Based on an analysis of 2019 data from 33 countries, representing 54% of the global working age population, the 2022 Gender Gap Report also evidences that men's share of time spent in unpaid work as a proportion spent in total work was 19%, while for women this was 55%.

In relation to the six pilot countries, it is interesting to consider their positions in the Economic Participation and Opportunity Subindex[14], that includes 146 countries:

> ➢ Australia: 38
> ➢ Cameroon: 66
> ➢ Chile: 105
> ➢ Mexico: 113
> ➢ Jordan: 126
> ➢ India: 143

It is important to note that these positions do not evidence internal disparities, poverty pockets and marginalized groups, which are the SCE Programme target populations.

At the very core of the Programme is the belief that globally there is a void in addressing the needs of adult women wanting to access livelihood or learning opportunities that increase their employment possibilities. As evidenced, across the globe, women face fewer income

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[13] Chen, M.A., E. Grapsa, G. Ismail, M. Rogan, M. Valdivia, L. Alfers, J. Harvey, A.C. Ogando, S. Orleans Reed, and S. Roever (2021). 'COVID-19 and Informal Work: Distinct Pathways of Impact and Recovery in 11 Cities Around the World'. WIEGO Paper 42. Manchester: WIEGO.

[14] Economic Participation and Opportunity: This subindex contains three concepts: the participation gap, the remuneration gap and the advancement gap. The participation gap is captured using the difference between women and men in labour force participation rates. The remuneration gap is captured through a hard data indicator (ratio of estimated female-to-male earned income) and a qualitative indicator gathered through the World Economic Forum's annual Executive Opinion Survey (wage equality for similar work). Finally, the gap between the advancement of women and men is captured through two hard data statistics (the ratio of women to men among legislators, senior officials and managers, and the ratio of women to men among technical and professional workers).

opportunities compared to men. Women are less likely to participate in the labour market, they have a far harder time finding a job than men and when they do, they are paid less and are less likely to work in formal employment. Women also have fewer opportunities for business expansion or career progression. Among people aged 25 to 54, the gender gap in labour force participation stood at 29.2 percentage points in 2022, with female participation at 61.4% and male participation at 90.6%[15].

Many other factors contribute to the "gender jobs gap": the disproportionate gender distribution of care and domestic work (for those in the 25 to 54 age group with at least one child under six, the labour force participation gap widens from 29.2 to 42.6 percentage points, with female participation at 53.1% and male participation at 95.7%[16]), women having fewer choices in their own movements, and the social norms that condition the patters and opportunities of economic participation of women, including usually more discontinuous pathways, less access to higher-paying income opportunities, amongst others. They also have less access to credit, are less likely to use banks, and have less collateral to grow a business. The 2022 Global Gender Gap Report also shows that women suffer more stress than men.

In relation to education, the Educational Attainment Gender Gap[17] in 2022 stands 4.7 percentage points away from full gender parity and is the area closest to achieving parity, in just 22 years. The subindex has improved steadily towards parity, with step-changes in 2008 and 2015. However, between 2021 and 2022, the distance between the highest and lowest gender gap score increased, reflecting widening disparities between countries within this subindex (2022 Global Gender Gap Report). While this subindex in relevant in terms of formal education, it does not reflect relevant data and gender gaps in relation to secondary chance education and vocational training. Beyond this limitation, it is interesting to note that the report shows that "gender gaps are substantially smaller in online enrolment than in traditional education. In ICT, for example, gender parity increased in online training between 2019 and 2021. However, enrolment behaviour shows that men and women's skilling preferences continue to respond to traditional patterns, creating skilling gender gaps for both men and women" (7).

It is more difficult for women to access and complete skills training programmes. Women are less likely to enrol, and when they do, they are more likely to drop out and less likely to find a job after training. This is explained by a mix of factors as noted above, such as family obligations, restrictions on mobility, perceptions as to what fields are appropriate for women to pursue, and financial constraints. In such a complex panorama there are programmes that try to address these issues, however according to this research there is not one that tried to address this globally, especially with a gender lens that aims to target all the above issues[18].

According to information captured in the Programme Brief, the lack of investment to provide access to quality adult education and learning opportunities for women has detrimental knock-on effects like a declining global women's labour force participation rate of less than

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[15] ILO. Spotlight on work statistics No. 12. March 2023.

[16] Ibid.

[17] This subindex captures the gap between women's and men's current access to education through ratios of women to men in primary-, secondary- and tertiary-level education. A longer-term view of the country's ability to educate women and men in equal numbers is captured through the ratio of the female literacy rate to the male literacy rate.

[18] Adapting Skills Training to Address Women's Participation. Jobs Notes N.7 World Bank 2022,

47%, compared to men at 72% and missed opportunities in industry and economic growth. Only 1 in 3 businesses have female participation in ownership (33%). In the last decade, the exclusion of women from the digital world has shaved $1 trillion from the gross domestic product of low and middle-income countries. Without action, this loss will grow to 1.5 trillion 2025.

2.2. A brief overview of the contexts of participating countries

The six countries were purposively selected to participate in the SCE pilot project[19]. While they share a common interest in, and need for, a solution for women who have missed out on education, they represent a very diverse range of national economic levels, governance profiles, social, cultural, political diversity, and stability and gender equity indicators. Furthermore, while the other countries did not have a comprehensive women's empowerment model in place, Jordan had expanded its Oasis programme since the onset of the Syria Crisis in 2012, establishing several empowerment hubs throughout the country. Therefore, it was agreed with the global SCE team that Jordan would not implement all SCE features but focus on the educational component and only report against Outcomes 1 and 3.

The next paragraphs summarize, in alphabetical order, key context information for each of the six pilot countries[20].

Australia: Unemployment is considerably higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander for all age groups, and at state level the unemployment rate of indigenous women more than doubles the one of non-indigenous women. Indigenous business representation (not disaggregated by sex) in the top ten industries is the highest in the construction sector with 34%, followed by administration and support with a 10%. In five of the ten top industries, indigenous representation is 4%. Among business owners and managers, the percentage of women has increased slightly over 30% during the 1991-2016 period, but has decreased close to 15 points among part-time owners and managers, which represents a much higher percentage of women participation in comparison to full-time owners and managers. Furthermore, Australia also has a large refugee population, receiving more than 20,000 humanitarian arrivals a year, including many recent Syrian and Iraqi refugees. Refugee women are likely to experience various forms of vulnerability, including trauma, language barriers, incomplete education and little or no work experience, creating economic insecurity and a lack of confidence in their capacity to find employment in Australia.

Cameroon: Since 2014, Cameroon has been hit by an unprecedented and complex triple humanitarian crisis, including a high influx of refugees from Nigeria and Central Africa due to conflict and the increase of internally displaced people (IDPs) due to the ongoing sociopolitical

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[19]The original selection of countries agreed with the donor was: Australia*, Cameroon*, Chile*, Colombia, Ethiopia, India*, Jordan*, Kenya, Mexico* and South Africa. Only those with the * would be funded by the donor and UNW was supposed to fundraise for the remaining countries. From the funded ones, Australia, Chile, India and Mexico were proposed by the donor while UNW proposed two crisis countries (Cameroon and Jordan) where infrastructure for broader rollout was already in place, which would allow greater outreach to beneficiaries and proof of concepts in displacement settings.

[20] Information for the entire section below is sourced from the UN WOMEN Education and Labour Market Assessment, 2019 aggregated report; and the SCE Country level plans, 2019.

crisis in the English-speaking regions[21]. At the same time, vulnerability due to food insecurity, malnutrition and epidemics have worsened as a result of the deteriorating economic landscape, recurring floods and droughts and lack of access to adequate basic social services[22]. On the other hand, while parity in education has improved, drop-out rates are high. Lower secondary completion rate for girls is 41%, while only 14% complete upper secondary school. Poverty, child marriage and limited access to contraceptives are key barriers both to return to school and to be engaged in skills development. Culture and religion play a very influential role.

Chile: The UNDP Inequality Index for gender gap indicates that the gender gap in Chile is 2.3 times higher than the gap observed in countries with a similar high human development index. According to the National Statistics Institute (INE) 48.5% of women actively participates in the labour market in comparison to 71.2% of men. Family reasons has been indicated by 4 out of 10 women as the main reason why they are not able to participate in employment. In terms of the pay gap for women who are working, on average women receive a monthly wage of 31.7% less than men. Mining, services and manufacturing are the main economic sectors, and women participation is mainly in the services sector. In the first quarter of 2023, 53.4% women and 65.2% men were salaried workers in the private sector, while 20.7% of women and 20.3% of men were self-employed. Informal work is more common for women than men (INE, 2023).

India: In 2015, a total of 3.7 million eligible girls who were out of school were girls from rural areas who had on an average spent four years in school. Labour force participation for women in rural India fell from 33% in 1993-94 to 25% in 2011. The National Family Health Survey for the years 2019 to 2021[23] reveals key rural-urban gaps in education; for example, while 65.9% of rural girls six years and older attended school, the urban percentage is 83%. In the case of women who attended at least ten years of schooling, the rural-urban gap is 33.7% versus 56.3%. Women's access to education in India and particularly in rural areas must be contextualized in light of gender-based cultural expectations, including the undervaluing of girls, the expected dedication of women to the domestic sphere, marital trends such as dowries that reinforce the idea of daughters as a burden and also limitations related to the existing school infrastructure that influence drop-outs.

Jordan: Jordan is one of the countries most impacted by the Syria crisis, hosting the second highest share of refugees per capita in the world, with around 650,000 registered Syrian refugees, most living among Jordanian communities rather than in camps. The total number of Syrians in Jordan may be up to 1.4 million, constituting more than 10 percent of the population of 10.5 million (49.4% women). The Kingdom is witnessing challenges that are largely consistent with any protracted displacement crisis and with its economic context, exacerbated further by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While Jordan must continue to address the immediate needs of refugees, it must also ensure a long-term humanitarian-development coherent approach to building resilience of vulnerable Jordanians. Jordan ranks 122 out of 146 countries on the World Economic Forum's 2021 Global Gender Gap Report, and 102 out of 189 countries on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) of UNDP's 2020 Human

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[22] According to the Humanitarian Response Plans, Cameroon is currently hosting approximately 237,000 refugees from the Central African Republic, primarily in the East and Adamoua Re.g.ions; an estimated 236,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), 59,000 returnees, 89,000 Nigerian refugees, and more than a million other vulnerable people.

[23] http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-5_FCTS/India.pdf

Development Report. Jordan struggles with these gender indices due to the low participation of women in political and economic life, despite positive scores on education, health, and other indicators. However, it has moved up in the economic participation axis of the Gender Gap Index, ranking 133rd in 2021, compared to 145th in 2020, a jump of 12 spots. But the pandemic has also significantly increased the burden of unpaid care work for women, making it more difficult for them to access paid work. Around 32 percent of young people aged 15-30 years are unemployed (of whom 49.5% are women), and female labour force participation is among the lowest in the world. The large gender gap in labour force participation and unemployment rates constrains Jordan's potential economic output, distorts the distribution of income and undermines inclusive growth.

Mexico: Mexico is classified as an upper-middle income country, with a Gross National Income (GNI) of $8,610 per capita, and high human development (ranked 77). However, this masks significant inequalities within the country, based on gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and geography. There are more than 56.1 million people living in poverty (43.5% of the Mexican population), with lack of access to quality education, health services and decent work opportunities. While nationally unemployment is low, the proportion of people in informal employment is high at 55.5%, including those working in unregistered jobs, domestic service without health or employment insurance, self-employed farmers, and informal jobs without a contract. Women represent 55.2% of the informal sector. In Mexico 6 out of 10 illiterate people are women. According to the OECD, the gender payment gap in 2022 in Mexico was 16.7%

3. THE PROGRAMME

3.1. Programme overview

3.1.1. Programme general design

Despite the scale of the global education challenge faced by marginalized women, young women and girls, there is not yet a proven approach to enabling successful second chance education at scale and leaving no one behind. UN Women has therefore developed a Second Chance Education and Vocational Learning (SCE) Programme (2018-2022) with context-specific, affordable and scalable learning and employment pathways for empowering the world's most disadvantaged young and adult women. The Programme supports women with three pathways out of exclusion: 1) re-entry into formal education, 2) vocational education that provides them with a pathway to employment, and 3) entrepreneurship training and skills that support them to start their own business. The overall design of the Programme includes four outcome areas and 12 outputs, three per outcome.

Table 3-1: SCE Global Outcomes and Outputs

OUTCOME	OUTPUT

1. More marginalized women and young women access and benefit from high quality educational content, material and learning pathways.	1.1 Relevant and appropriate content is developed and curated in each context.
	1.2 Learning and career pathways are followed by women and young women accessing appropriate e-learning platforms.
	1.3. Context-specific delivery mechanisms are established, including safe community-based centres or Women's Empowerment Hubs
2. More marginalized women and young women benefit from increased employment, livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities.	2.1. Potential employers in the private, public and NGO sector become more gender-aware and gender responsive and more women and young women are hired and retained.
	2.2. Private and public sector offer bridging programmes which are taken up by women and young women graduates emerging from the Programme.
	2.3. Graduate mentoring and coaching programme established. Women and young women become mentors to new learners to share experiences, advice, and support for second chance education.
3. Fewer marginalized women and young women are disadvantaged and denied education opportunities due to harmful and discriminatory social norms.	3.1. Awareness and advocacy of the importance of women's and young women's right to education and entrepreneurship and vocational learning, and how this benefits their families and societies is increased.
	3.2. Engagement with community stakeholders, households and individuals to support women's and young women's education and entrepreneurship and vocational learning is promoted.
	3.3. Women's and young women's education, entrepreneurship and vocational learning opportunities are supported and reinforced through social systems and networks.
4. More marginalized women and young women have improved access to education and employment pathways through enhanced multi-sectoral policy and financing frameworks that enabling scaling of successful SCE solutions.	4.1. Evidence-based advocacy for women's and young women's second chance education conducted with national and local policy makers.
	4.2. Cross-sectoral legislative and policy reform supported to promote marginalized women's and young women's access to second chance education.
	4.3. Financing frameworks are supported to translate policies and strategies into practice.

Source: MTR Report, July 2020.

3.1.2. Theory of Change

It is anticipated that if increased access to high quality content is provided with an emphasis on learning outcome and retention; and if links to the labour market are established to increase the value of education and learning for women; and if positive social norms support second chance education and vocational learning for women; and if supportive multi-sectoral policy and financing frameworks for second chance education and vocational learning for marginalized women are promoted; then women will be empowered to determine their future; because the structural barriers that women face in equally accessing quality education, learning and decent work opportunities will have been addressed through long-term systematic change.

Illustration 3-1: SCE Theory of Change

The SCE Theory of Change encourages design of context-specific, affordable and scalable learning and employment pathways that have in-built solutions for removing barriers to access for the different beneficiary profiles. The four outcome areas (learning, earning, norms, and policy) are addressed as a guide to act as "pathway finders" that connect women with flexible learn-to-earn options, engage men and communities in dialogue on limiting social norms, and identify policy solutions for scale with governments.

Illustration 3-2: Outcome Areas

In relation to the ToC, it is important to note that the way assumptions were defined is based on the common definition of assumptions in the Logical Framework, as external conditions needed for change to happen. In a ToC, assumptions usually refer to hypothesis or ideas that underlies the projected change logic, and thus help understand and justify the strategic design and chosen pathways towards change. This is not only a technical note, but an important clarification since using ToC as a programme management tool implies that assumptions and their validity are regularly revised, to make needed adaptive changes timely. This allows that the intervention keeps moving towards achieving outcomes and impact regardless of contextual or other relevant changes. In times of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA), this is an important tool for strategic management.

Table 3-2: SCE Theory of Change Key Assumptions

Key Assumptions	Despite social norms and unpaid caregiver responsibilities, women and young women will participate in accessing tailored-educational content at local, community-based learning centers, and will have the energy and application to absorb and begin to use the knowledge and skills. Other service providers in the same geographical areas will be willing to collaborate. Appropriate partners and facilities exist locally. The e-learning element does not exclude or put off some potential members of target audiences by its unfamiliarity. It is possible to make e-learning modules which are culturally and contextually adapted, in the time frame available. The project will attract enough support from leaders, to overcome any antipathy from others.	Increased work opportunities and potential financial independence and improved self-esteem, standing and confidence will provide an incentive for women and young women to enroll in second chance education and vocational training Programmes. Women and young women will be willing to work in male-dominated sectors and men approve. Private, public and NGO sectors will support the formation of labor linkages with vocational training Programmes. The local economy is dynamic enough to provide jobs. Women and young women are not put at risk by entering a workplace where their security or other needs are not normally catered for. Male candidates for jobs do not retain a competitive advantage despite the SCE Programme. Financial and technical support for women and young women entrepreneurs is available. Childcare facilities are available to mothers wishing to work.	Advocacy and awareness will lead to action-oriented changes that increase willingness and motivation for women and young women and women to defy negative social norms and overcome barriers to education. Community-led solutions will increase the long-term support for positive gender norms. Support structures and networks can be created in communities. Countervailing opinions will not be strengthened and cause a negative harmful social reaction to these changes. Local and national leaders from both genders and different age/class groups are willing to champion change and are influential enough to do so. Other changes – economic, environmental, political, security – do not intervene and disrupt progress	Political willingness to identify and address the key barriers to education for women and young women. Commitment to implementing recommendations to overcoming barriers through financial and legislative reforms and strategies. Shared priorities across sectors regarding important barriers that nee to be addressed. Political cycles are in synch with the project cycle in project countries Other changes – economic, environmental, political, security – d not intervene and disrupt progress Funding is available.

Source: Programme Document 2018.

3.1.3. Selected countries

Six countries with very different realities were covered under the following typology:

1) Low and middle-income countries with high poverty pockets, Indigenous groups, among other groups - Chile, India and Mexico;
2) In conflict, displacement and crisis settings countries- Jordan and Cameroon;
3) In a developed context, but with marginalized Indigenous and refugee women experiencing high rates of poverty and violence- Australia[24].

3.1.4. Learning and earning pathways

SCE program design aims to support women with three pathways out of exclusion: 1) re-entry into formal education, 2) vocational education that provides them with a pathway to employment, and 3) entrepreneurship training and skills that support them to start their own business.

While the small business and vocational pathways leading women to decent income and employment embrace the overall goal of the SCE program, implementation demonstrated the importance of the life skills pathway being offered to fill women's gaps in confidence and awareness of their rights so that they can become their own "pathway finders".

The SCE Programme is delivered through two modalities: UN Women Empowerment Hubs and e-learning. Most SCE programmes offer a blended approach, with e-learning complementing in-person activities in the hubs, while the Chile SCE Programme is entirely online. E-learning is offered in some form to all participants, allowing flexibility in the delivery of learning with in-person, online, and hybrid approaches used according to circumstances, making it easier for women to participate.

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[24] 2018 SCE Program Design Document; SCE MTR 2020

According to the 2023 Annual Report, SCE participants selected the learning pathways according to the following data: 6,914 in return to formal education, 24,380 in self-employment/entrepreneurship and 23,571 in employment/vocational skills. Importantly, 78,864 participants acquired life skills/basic skills (including digital skills). Increasingly, the country experiences have validated the importance of formal and informal training to address other relevant and enabling topics and skills before more formal training can be pursued.

3.1.5. Partnerships

A vital component of SCE's model across all six pilot countries has been the diverse partners that have come together to offer a holistic second chance for women participants. Partnerships include implementing agreements and other forms of collaboration. UN Women works with community-embedded local organizations with the experience and community relations to ensure effective grassroots implementation of the SCE Programme and its signature features.

The Programme also works with governments (national and sub-national level) to foster enabling legislative and policy environments, accompanied by financial frameworks to ensure sustainable, impact-oriented support to women to pursue second chance education.

In addition, UN Women partners with the private sector to ensure workplaces are equipped to employ and retain women who are pursuing a second chance. Private sector stakeholders that champion digital skill acquisition and e- learning for women are also critical to Programme success, as are stakeholders that seek to procure goods and services from women entrepreneurs. Moreover, private funding has also been instrumental in the Programme, particularly in India, where SCE has been able to obtain and use Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds from companies such as MIH Internet India Private Limited.

3.1.6. Funding

As of 30 June 2023, the total expenditure of the Programme was 23,146,573.71 $. The Programme reached then 86% delivery rate from a total of 26, 893, 702 $ received in funds until June 2023, including the new instalment for the extension starting July 2022. It is important to note that due to the migration to a new financial management application in UN Women and the fact that transfer of data is not completed, the advances and staff payroll for the period January–June 2023 are not yet fully reflected in the expenditure report. These expenditures will be reflected in the certified financial report, to be submitted to the donor in 2024.

3.1.7. Programme Signature Features

In the last year, the SCE Programme Signature Features were fine-tuned and articulated in a comprehensive model:

Illustration 3-3: SCE Signature Features
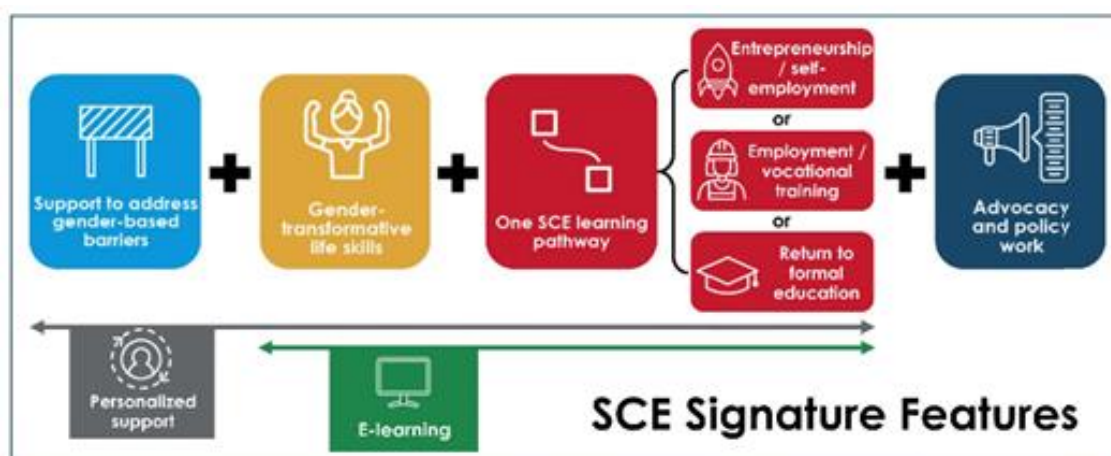
Source: Programme Brief

The Signature Features are: Support to address the gender-based barriers that limit women's participation in SCE; gender-transformative life skills training; one or more of the SCE learning pathways (entrepreneurship, employment and return to formal education); e-learning; personalized support through mentoring and peer networks; and advocacy and policy work advocating for the removal of the structural constraints to women's participation in education, training and the workforce.

3.2. Brief overview of the country priorities and models

Based on a preliminary definition of potential Programme beneficiaries in each country, a set of participatory country needs and labour market opportunity assessments was implemented during the inception phase to guide the design of each country-level project and development of country plans. To ensure methodological consistency and to be able to consolidate findings efficiently in a global aggregated report, the firm Ove Arup & Partners International was selected to conduct the assessments across the six pilot countries. The assessment was designed to inform tailoring of learning pathways to suit the needs of the labour market and facilitate the transition of targeted women to gainful employment.

This section presents a summary of the Programme characteristics and implementation in each of the six pilot countries, which certainly provides an overview of the diversity. It is important to mention the ongoing initiative to develop SCE Signature Features for each of the participating countries, under the same format, which will also facilitate comparison, as well as replication and scaling initiatives.

Australia
SCE Australia worked with two implementing partners to target two groups of women: refugee and migrant women in the state of Victoria and indigenous women in Western Sydney, as well as regional New South Wales and Western Australia. Overall, the key pathways offered were entrepreneurship and employment, with core activity in the garment industry, light manufacturing, hospitality, retail, construction, administration, health and care sectors.

The SisterWorks partner[25] ran two centres in Melbourne and Bendigo, with a third satellite centre in Dandenong, while reaching women through mobile hubs across Victoria. They also worked with women through a web application designed to engage women with low or no literacy. To address the specific barriers identified amongst refugee/migrant women in Victoria, the partner initially offered a model with 4 integrated components focussed on entrepreneurship: i) Design Lab - a workshop where women learn to make high quality products/services as part of a production line and collaborative teamwork; ii) Cooking Lab - a commercial kitchen where women learn end-to-end skills in food production, transferable business and mentoring; iii) Work Lab - learning about retail and supply chain distribution channels; iv) Business Hub - navigating education, productive employment, entrepreneurship and leadership. Due to the partnership with UN Women, SisterWorks pivoted to an employment-centric model, to better meet the needs of the participants. The Employment Pathways Program is an end-to-end format - meaning multiple course contents are covered within each initiative, including:

- Industry specific training (hospitality, customer service, warehousing)
- Job ready training (job types in the specific sector, resume building, interview skills)
- Connections to employment opportunities with employment partners (includes site visit, onboarding support)
- In-house casual employment at SisterWorks for those not pursuing external employment.

Small business training is still on offer for those who want to actively pursue an entrepreneurship pathway, rather than creating necessity-based entrepreneurs.

The partner Real Futures is a vocational training and employment centre (VTEC) that is part of the Australian government's strategy to end disparities for first Australians through support-based training and employment. As a partner in Western Sydney, it set up a Women's Business Second Chance Hub, focused predominantly on employment pathways but also offering entrepreneurship. Real Futures works with indigenous women to understand and learn the skills and training that are required for the available job opportunities and offers pre-employment and post-employment mentorship and support.

Cameroon

The SCE Cameroon Programme was implemented in the seven regions of the country (East, Adamawa, Far North, Centre, Littoral Northwest and Southwest Regions) with 5 implementing parties: the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family (MINPROFF), which is the main implementing partner, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MINEFOP), Planet Positive, Big Steps Outreach Network (BONET), and Cameroon Youth School Tech Incubator. It targeted the most vulnerable women, namely refugees, internally displaced persons and members of the host community, by creating opportunities for access to quality courses and training to enhance their employability and entrepreneurial skills. To achieve this, SCE Cameroon ran 8 Women's Empowerment Centres (2 in Bamenda, 1 in Buea, 1 in Yaounde, 1 in Douala, 2 in Maroua and 1 in Bertoua) with 2 women's cohesion spaces in the Ngam and Minawao refugee camps. Due to the limited accessibility of the centres, 20 additional training centres were created in 20 villages to facilitate the participation of beneficiaries living far from the Women's Empowerment Centres.

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[25] No longer a partner.

Cameroon's implementing parties offered the following learning and earning pathways:

- Vocational and entrepreneurial skills, with a particular focus on sewing (and/or embroidery), animal husbandry, ITC, agriculture and small trade activities.
- Life skills, with a particular focus on GBV, sexual reproductive health and family planning information and services, and the development of life skills for women's well-being and preparation for employment.
- Foundational skills (learning to learn): Literacy education and language learning (French) offered to those who are unable to read and write nor speak the required languages in the project sites, to prepare them for joining earning pathways at a later phase.

Chile

The SCE Programme was initially designed to target women aged between 19 and 29 who had not completed primary or secondary education, living in urban areas in the Antofagasta, Metropolitan and Araucanía regions, from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds, including indigenous women and migrant women. However, due to the COVID-19 crisis, it was decided to broaden the scope, eliminate geographical and educational filters and move to fully online implementation.

The Programme aimed to develop a sustainable system for the empowerment of women, eliminating the barriers that prevent their educational development, access to work and full exercise of their rights. The implementation in Chile consisted of three different phases. During the first phase, three implementing partners (Acción Emprendedora, Infocap and Veomás) were responsible for providing training in digital skills, personal development and the path chosen by participants: entrepreneurship, employment or continuity of education. After completing phase one, participants were considered graduates. The second phase consisted of optional mentoring sessions, while the third phase focused on sessions to become a mentor to the Programme and in their communities. Second and third phases were implemented by the partner AIEP and were offered to all women enrolled in the Programme. At the same time, participants who chose the employment path were referred to the Fundación Emplea, where they received personalized support in drawing up their resumes, job-hunting, preparing for interviews and receiving information on relevant topics.

In early 2022, SCE had the support of a consultancy firm specialized in education and e-learning, to develop a more unified and efficient methodology, which was based on the good practices observed in the five implementing partners mentioned above. Since July 2022, the new methodology has been implemented, continuing with the transversal approach of personal skills digital skills as the basis for economic empowerment. Women then chose for entrepreneurship or employment and are grouped in two, advanced and beginners, depending on their experience and level of education. After a three-week course, women have tailored counselling through mentorship, and are then connected with funding possibilities, advanced training and linkages with employment opportunities. All the learning process is supported by tutors.

Additionally, targeted initiatives were developed to focalize learning and training opportunities in key areas for potential scale up: national level leadership school, employment pilot for non-traditional economic sectors oriented for young women, and economic empowerment of refugee women from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Jordan

Jordan is one of the countries most impacted by the Syria crisis, with up to 1.4 million Syrians living in refugee camps and host communities. The Kingdom is witnessing challenges with gender indices, and the pandemic has significantly increased the burden of unpaid care work for women, making it more difficult for them to access paid work. While Jordan must continue to address the immediate needs of refugees, it must also ensure a long-term humanitarian-development coherent approach to building resilience of vulnerable Jordanians. UN Women Jordan launched in 2012 a unique model to respond to the urgent needs of Syrian refugee women and girls in camp settings as well as to the needs of refugee and Jordanian women and girls in host communities, the Oasis empowerment centre. The Oasis centres have evolved over time to become multi-sectoral service centres focusing on resilience and empowerment for women and girls, while also engaging men and boys in dialogue and mobilization for gender and social equality. The Oasis model was launched with one Oasis centre in the Za'atari refugee camp and has now expanded to 4 Oasis centres in camp settings (three in Za'atari and one in Azraq camps) and 18 centres in non-camp settings. The overall goal of the Oasis model is that more Syrian women refugees and vulnerable Jordanian women are better served by humanitarian action and resilience-building initiatives. UN Women also focuses on maximizing project synergies for transformational impact and increasing investment in inclusive national systems for deeper impact and sustainability. The Oasis model is conceptualized around three building blocks:

- Secure livelihood opportunities provided via cash for work, that graduates into sustainable employment opportunities, whether through job placement, entrepreneurship or work permit applications;
- Gender-based violence prevention, protection and awareness raising services;
- Education opportunities linked to the labour market, leadership and civic engagement initiatives for women, while also engaging men on social issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Since 2019, Jordan is part of the SCE Programme, under which women in 8 out of the 22 Oasis Centres were supported to enhance their digital skills through a virtual education platform, focusing on improving their life skills, educational levels, employability and entrepreneurships. Between 2018 and 2022 implementation was through a local implementing party, the Arab Women's Organization (AWO). Using the UN Women's Oasis Centres, the Programme benefited thousands of women in both refugee camps and host communities with access to relevant education opportunities. The SCE Programme in Jordan aims to provide vulnerable women with skills relevant to the labour market in their local context. It focuses primarily on the vocational and entrepreneurial pathway (Learning to Earn) with elements of the Life Skills and Foundational Skills pathways, tailoring the contents to the particular needs of the two target groups: Jordanian women and Syrian refugee women.

Since the beginning of 2023, UN Women Jordan has been preparing to bring a new SCE partner on board to conduct a training of trainers for 22 master trainers that will provide educational courses in all 22 Oasis centres based on a comprehensive curriculum including digital, financial, and gender-transformative life skills.

India

SCE India has targeted women aged 18 years and above from the most marginalized scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minority communities. The Programme was implemented in 12 districts in the four states of Bihar, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan. The Professional

Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) was the key implementing party alongside nine other leading non-governmental organizations.

SCE Programme in India built on existing programmatic and policy initiatives of the UN Women India country office in the areas of women's economic empowerment, combating violence against women and girls, and strengthening women's leadership and participation, including through the "We Empower Asia" programmes and the "Safe Cities" flagship programme on women's and girls' mobility and access to safe public and work spaces. The Programme's model was based on the social mobilization of women organized in Self-Help Groups (SHGs), village organizations and federations. In most of the 12 districts, the women's collectives established links with the Panchayati Raj (local governance) bodies. They have been involved in the Programme as local participants and champions, in order to create a local link and acceptability, as well as a mechanism for the future sustainability of the Programme. More broadly, SCE India has connected women with services in the urban space through informed choice, linking them with quality training institutions, mobilizing funds for vocational training through links with SHG (self-help groups) architecture and financial institutions, and providing placement assistance, including peer support to cope with the pressure of employment.

Mexico

The SCE program in Mexico was implemented in 15 training centres in three states: Puebla, the State of Mexico, and Jalisco. The key implementing parties were the Servicio de Promoción Integral Comunitario Juvenil (SEPICJ) in the State of Puebla and since 2021 also in the State of Mexico, ProSociedad in the State of Jalisco and Convivencia Joven in the State of Mexico from 2019 to middle of 2021.

In Mexico targeted women were mainly middle-aged women in their 30's to 50's, urban and semiurban with a low educational level, no income generating activities or poor work conditions, heavy care responsibilities and a low household income. Some differences in women reached by the Programme in the different states were: in State of Mexico, most of targeted women, besides the conditions already mentioned, were also subject to domestic or public violence, and some indigenous and semi-urban communities were reached through itinerant activities. In the case of the state of Puebla, the profiles were divided into two groups: urban and semiurban women from the municipality of Tehuacan and indigenous women living in rural areas in this region reached through itinerant activities because of difficulties to access hubs or internet. Both groups had lower levels of education and literacy and higher levels of deprivation than the State of Mexico. In the case of Jalisco, the women targeted were both urban and rural, in urban settings with slightly better levels of education and literacy, but in the rural setting targeted women were both young women around 20 years old and also another strong group around 40 to 50 years old; most women lived in rural and semiurban communities with lower levels of education, income and precarious conditions.

SCE Mexico has provided key learning and earning pathways for improved livelihoods through entrepreneurship in green trade, eco-tourism, organic handicrafts, sustainable agriculture, medicinal plants, sewing, floriculture and farm animal husbandry; and through the development of employability skills in the fields of administration, accountancy and law, sales consultancy, purchasing coordination, customer service, sewing, beauty, physiotherapy, information and computer technology, and software design. The Programme has focused on developing in all its participants a combination of soft skills such as confidence, leadership and

relationship building, as well as hard skills such as IT, basic reading and comprehension, technology training, finance and English language skills.

4. FINDINGS

The evaluation findings are presented under each of the evaluation questions formulated per evaluation criteria, plus the question on best practices, lessons learned and innovations. The findings relate to the corresponding assumptions/hypothesis and indicators defined in the evaluation matrix.

4.1. RELEVANCE

EQ1. Are the SCE Programme design and objectives relevant to the UN Women priorities and in meeting the needs and aspirations of the target population of more marginalized and young women?

F1. The SCE is fully aligned with and relevant to the UN Women priorities, contributes to the 2030 Agenda and its mandate to "leave no one behind", and is also aligned to global commitments to women's rights, gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Alignment to more specific regional commitments and priorities is less visible.

Gender equality is at the very heart of human rights and United Nations values. Gender-based discrimination is prohibited under almost every human rights treaty. Consequently, the SCE Programme is aligned with the following international Commitments to Gender Equality[26][27]

- **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979)**, that calls on States Parties to "take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:
    o The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
    o The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
    o The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service, and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;
    o The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work".
- **The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995),** a global agenda for women's empowerment, that underlines the need to take appropriate measures in consideration of women's reproductive role and functions and "eliminate discriminatory practices by employers […] such as the denial of employment and dismissal due to pregnancy or breastfeeding, or requiring proof of contraceptive use,

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[26]https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Annex%202%20Global%20and%20Re.g.ional%20Commitments%20to%20Gender%20Equality.pdf

[27] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/18e73c7b-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/18e73c7b-en

and take effective measures to ensure that pregnant women, women on maternity leave or women re-entering the labour market after childbearing are not discriminated against".

- Core **ILO Conventions**, which establish key labour standards that promote effective equality between women and men in employment:
  - o The Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) (ILO, 1951[19])
  - o The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) (ILO, 1958[20])
  - o The Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) (ILO, 1981[21])
  - o The Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) (ILO, 2000[22])
  - o The Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) (ILO, 2011[23]).
- The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the **2030 Agenda** that mandates leaving no one behind and recognizes the importance of "achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, and equal work for work of equal value" in Target 8.5.
- The **Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)**, a set of seven principles offering guidance to business on how to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. WEPs are a primary vehicle for corporate delivery on gender equality dimensions of the of the 2030 agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, the SCE Programme responds to **Aid Effectiveness Commitments Policies** on gender equality that emphasize the importance of matching policies by the needed resources to implement them.

Though less explicit and visible, the SCE Programme is also aligned with the numerous **regional commitments** that underscore the importance of and uphold gender equality, including the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, adopted in 2003 by the African Union; the 1994 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (the Convention of Belem Do Para), the 2011 European Convention on Preventing Violence against Women and Domestic Violence; and the Pacific Islands Forum Gender Equality Declaration of 2012[28], the Montevideo Consensus of 2013.

The SCE Programme was directly related to at least two of the five priorities of the UN Women 2018-2021 Strategic Plan[29]:

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[28] Ibid

[29]https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Executive%20Board/2017/Second%20re.g.ular%20session%202017/Africa%20group%20SP%202018-2021.pdf

Illustration 4-1: Priorities of the UN Women 2018-2021 Strategic Plan

| A comprehensive set of global norms and standards on gender equality and women's empowerment is strengthened and implemented | Women lead, participate and benefit equally from governance systems | Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy |

| All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence | Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action |

The Programme remains aligned and relevant to the new 2022-2025 UN Women Strategic priorities which include Women's Economic Empowerment[30].

> F2. The Programme and its Theory of Change (ToC) are a relevant framework to implement in very diverse contexts and with different population groups, within the participating countries and beyond.

Programme evidence, including the in-progress individual country Signature Features and results, show the strength of the SCE Programme Design and Theory of Change that combines a global umbrella framework and management structure, with the design and implementation of context-specific learning and employment pathways that have in-built solutions for removing barriers to access for the different beneficiary profiles.

The fact that the needs assessments in all countries were undertaken by one consulting firm facilitated a unique, coherent and consistent approach to diversity, reducing the risk of ungrounded selection of target groups and outcome-oriented country responses detached from the articulating Programme DNA and strategic framework. During the implementation, coordination mechanisms, global standardized guidelines and knowledge products, and applied surveys, contributed to maintain the Programme interlinkages, coherence and sense-giving connections, while embracing country adaptations and COVID-19 responses.

To ratify validity, solve technical limitations[31], and potentially enhance the relevance of the global framework, the Programme would benefit from a bottom-up review and enrichment of the ToC based on country adaptations and experience. A good example is related to the work undertaken in relation to men/positive masculinities, which is not reflected in the actual ToC.

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[30]https://open.unwomen.org/our-global-results/strate.g.ic-plan/2022-2025#:~:text=UN%20Women's%20Strate.g.ic%20Plan%202022%E2%80%932025%20sets%20a%20vision%20and,the%20Plan%2C%20starting%20in%202022.

[31] Like reconceptualizing and revising the assumptions.

According to the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022[32], "women's labour force participation in 2022 is projected to remain below pre-pandemic levels in 169 countries and areas." Important efforts during the pandemic period enabled to keep the SCE learning hubs operational, while online activities, including those through the SCE e-portal, increased in relevance and outreach, further validating the flexible, blended and context-responsive approach of the Programme. In principle, such flexibility also facilitates reaching the prioritized young and most marginalized women, as defined by each country during the inception phase.

The initial country assessments focused on the identification and definition of target populations, labour market analysis and the design of specific strategies. Also, learning and adaptations during implementation were key to ensure context relevance even under changing situations and unforeseen crisis. However, data collected so far (based on self-identification) does not fully match the initial beneficiary profiles and country priority target populations.

The SCE Mid-Term Review (MTR) in 2020 recommended strengthening the collection of profile data of the women participating in the Programme at entry, exit, and monitoring their employment outcomes over time after graduation. UN Women therefore adapted the Kobo survey methodology used during the MTR to consolidate registration data of beneficiaries collected by all implementing partners/responsible parties (IPs/RPs). Collected data shows how the Programme is attracting a very diverse group of women, but not fully responding to the initially prioritized target groups and leave no one behind focus.

Entrance surveys implemented since 2021 in response to the MTR, provide key information about who the Programme is serving; nevertheless, there is a need to close the gap between the very precise and sometimes complex and differentiated definitions of target populations per country and the capacity to generate data that reflects that this is the population effectively addressed. For example, the SCE Programme in India targeted young women and women from scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and minorities. In Mexico, specific profiles were determined by state and region. While in Puebla indigenous women were one of the two key target populations, in Guadalajara the Programme focused on mainly young urban women with medium levels of education and literacy. It is clear that it is difficult that global surveys reflect all the details included in the very diverse characterizations of the target populations, so there is a need to further discuss how to validate and capture some more country-specific profiles.

A comparison of the January and July 2023 data of the entrance surveys could indicate some progress towards prioritizing marginalized groups. For instance, data from July 2023 shows that 38% of female beneficiaries had no income, compared with 20% in January 2022; also,

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[32] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/

most recent data shows that 50% of the beneficiaries live in a rural or semi-urban location, whereas previous data suggests that this was the case for only 39% of the women concerned. In addition, July 2023 data reports that 32% of women recognized themselves as indigenous. New data at country level also provides a better grasp on the population characterization and the marginalized groups the Programme is reaching. It is important to note that these averages can hide important differences between countries. For example, the latest survey data shows that 63 % of women beneficiaries in Cameroon have no income, against 38% in Mexico. In general terms there is a need for the global level to ensure focus on marginalized groups and for (some) country strategies to be revised and fine-tuned to effectively target and be relevant for the most disadvantaged, taking into consideration an intersectional approach.

The evaluation notes and endorses the 2022 Programme decision to redefine and focus its target population on "marginalized women", avoiding a specific mention to young women. This enhances clarity and diminishes complexity when choosing target populations, and also facilitates related data measurements and accountability. Focusing on "marginalized populations" enables a more ample intersectional approach and also responds to the increasingly widespread ageing population trends and the need to address the growing "silver economy[33]".

4.2. EFFECTIVENESS

EQ2 To what extent has the SCE Programme reached its planned objectives and desired outcomes: i) re-entry into formal education, ii) vocational education that provides them with a pathway to employment, and iii) entrepreneurship training and skills that support them to start their own business?

The Programme has proven to be an effective model to tackle marginalized women educational and employment needs from a global though country-sensitive perspective. However, the level of achievement, the focus on marginalized women and the impact of COVID-19 present significant country variations. In relation to Outcome 1, by June 2023 enrolled learners represented 98% of the defined target. Achievements in Outcomes 3 and 4 are in general less convincing, though generating enabling legal, policy and social-cultural environments is crucial. The definition of realistic targets and a greater impact-orientation towards gender transformation, are important considerations towards the future.

F4. The presence of a ToC in the design document is a crucial tool to assess effectiveness and guide a results-oriented adaptive management of a pilot programme both at global and country level. However, its utilization to guide M&E, management and decision-making was limited during implementation.

In principle, the presence of a ToC in the design document is a crucial tool to assess effectiveness and guide a results-oriented adaptive management of a pilot programme both at global and country level. It is important to analyse the extent to which Programme data fully endorses the ToC. Post graduate data (survey), more in-depth, experience-based cause-

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[33] Silver Economy is the part of the general economy that relevant to the needs and demands of older adults, including the products and services they purchase directly and the further economic activity this spending generates.   http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/2dca9276-3ec5-11e8-b5fe-01aa75ed71a1.0002.01/DOC_1

effect analysis at country level, the SCE global and country Signature Features and cross-fertilization, can at this stage validate and potentially nourish and enrich the global ToC, reinforcing the transformational cause-effect logic of the Programme.

For example, the post-graduate survey provides a medium to long-term view of the economic and social impact of the Programme. In the latest post-graduate data for 2023, 88% of women respondents said they were earning an income after finishing the Programme, while 85% said they were still part of a peer network created for the Programme. This type of data substantiates in part the Programme's ToC.

Nevertheless, no evidence was found about the utilization of the ToC as a living document to guide M&E, management and decision-making during Programme implementation; it is important to mention the limitations of the existing monitoring system that does not allow a more adaptive management.

Also, it is not clear whether country adaptations followed/reflect a clear, explicit and consistent change logic, including COVID-19 responses that are in general evaluated as timely and appropriate. The ongoing exercise to systematize country Signature Features is a first step towards explicitly unpacking the detailed logic of the national SCE versions, and to analyse to which extent country-specific choices and combinations were the best ones to maximize results and achieve the desired impact. Furthermore, from a systemic approach, it is important to analyse how the choices influenced the capacity/strength of the Programme to transform root causes and boost positive, sustainable change for direct beneficiaries and beyond. Until now and despite recognized improvements, the Programme M&E processes and tools are limited to capture structural changes

As already mentioned, to make the most out of having a ToC, assumptions must be regularly revised to ensure their validity and/or proceed with required adaptations. In the case of the Programme ToC, this would additionally require to revise the current assumptions to ensure they reflect key hypothesis that underly the change logic, and not conditions needed to ensure the changes. Registering and updating any changes in the ToC is important to keep the strategic change logic clear and stakeholders aligned. No records were found that evidenced this happening during Programme implementation.

> F5. Efforts at global and country level were prioritized to enhance standardization and address quality issues that influence effectiveness, including IP selection and training, training guidelines, content selection and development, learning modalities. Guidelines, systematizations and transfer methodologies are some of the products that capture these efforts. Nevertheless, there is still room for improved implementation based on standardization, institutionalization and cross-fertilization between countries.

The period from the SCE retreat (October 2022) until the end of the evaluation period , marked a crucial stage of consolidation for the SCE Programme. At the global level, the period provided an opportunity to further strengthen the SCE model with flexible delivery modes through hubs and e-hubs, focusing on the learning and earning pathways most in demand and filling the gap in relevant quality content for marginalized women, particularly life-planning content.

SCE's key advancement during this period resulted to some extent from increased knowledge exchanges between country offices (COs) and among implementing partners/responsible parties (IPs/RPs) themselves. To cite some of these advancements, last year saw the finalization and publication of several knowledge products that capture the diverse experiences of the six pilot projects, all of which are available in the UN Women digital library. A first-ever global newsletter was also produced and disseminated internally and externally among SCE partners and other stakeholders to ensure knowledge exchange. In addition, the global retreat in Geneva that gathered the global team and country teams has been instrumental to key advancements, like the creation of the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) working group. The MEL working group met virtually every week from October 2022 to June 2023 and collectively developed a completely new and revised version of the SCE results framework, with updated outcomes, outputs, indicators, definitions and means of verification. These advancements are recognised but the Programme could further benefit from a more structured and systematic learning and knowledge management strategy.

Also, solid and regular communication channels and spaces between relevant partners, within the Programme and at country levels (for example between different centres), are important to ensure coherency, learning collaboration and cross-fertilization. For example, SCE Mexico has successfully communicated and collaborated with its IPs/RPs to develop more than ten knowledge products this year, thereby contributing to strengthening SCE's transfer model. These include manuals and documents on topics such as the learning centres ways of working, the SCE education model, mentoring, facilitators, private sector engagement and the use of EdApp.

The SCE Programme responded positively to the recommendations made in the 2020 MTR at global and country level, with significant adaptations to its approach and focus, increasing its maturity and consolidation as a robust, coherent "Global Programme with Local Solutions", which is more than the sum of country experiences. The extension until December 2023 allowed further continuity of the improvement processes and measures.

The MTR recommendations that were most important and relevant to this evaluation are noted and summarized below:

- Need to formalize/ standardize SCE
- Online platform viability
- Sector coordination platforms – in place for all country programmes
- Advocacy strategies - elaborated and then used in all country programmes
- Minimum standards requirements for scale up in place
- Shift towards beneficiary-driven programming (entry, graduate, and follow-up surveys in place)
- Hubs' decentralization - outreach mechanisms in place
- Adult learning development – indicators of enhanced adult learning techniques
- Documentation of training material
- Formalisation of the use of mentors

The Programme MTR response included the development of a number of knowledge products to capture experiences, document the evidence base of the global model and provide practical tools towards greater standardization. The products filled gaps in knowledge around adult women's learning but also supported advocacy and fundraising efforts externally. The knowledge products included the following publications:

- [Our space is our space](#)
- [A second chance for women through online learning](#)
- [Second Chance Education (SCE) signature features](#)
- [SCE hub handbook](#)
- [SCE facilitators' guide](#)
- 3 manuals including an SCE Operational Manual (internal UN Women programming)[34].

In addition to these publications[35], knowledge products to support scaling also included a standardized approach for IPs/RPs to develop local video-based courses and the SCE e-portal with a Kolibri library of curated open education resources.

Further on standardization and institutionalization, UN Women partnered with Open University to produce SCE Life Planning video-based courses suitable for low-literacy women on life and career planning, which aim to inspire women to think about their futures and guide them in their thinking about the sort of work they should pursue. In the COVID-19 context, the approach involved remote, tailored training of IPs/RPs staff over more than three months. A total of 16 facilitators across five countries developed skills in many aspects of content development, including script writing, narration, interviewing and filming. Capacity is therefore in place to contribute to the design and production of good-quality content independently beyond the partnership with Open University.

> F6. While the Programme was able to strengthen its monitoring and reporting mechanism by defining indicators and including post graduate surveys, there is still room for improvement to capture gender transformative changes.

Following extensive discussion during the SCE Global Retreat in Geneva in October 2022, a working group of M&E staff from pilot countries and Programme headquarters was created. After several months of collaboration and discussion, new survey versions were created, tested and implemented. The creation of the post-graduate survey, to be completed six months after course finalization, is a very important milestone to measure Programme outcomes over time, even though implementation biases (e.g. over-representation of certain countries in global results based on higher levels of survey completion) and outreach challenges remain and have been progressively addressed to build a substantial enough quality evidence base.

Standardizing project terms and indicators, such as the definition of "graduate", as well as the data that is gathered, to generate information that is comparable between Programme activities, IPs/RPs and COs, is a key improvement towards accountability, learning and increased effectiveness. Nevertheless, an important call for attention highlights the need to differentiate between women enrolled and women reached/mobilized. All the previous

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[34] It was informed that the Operational Manual has been swapped for an internal folder on SharePoint for interested new COs which contains all the relevant resources they might need. This decision was made because UNW recently changed operational procedures and system and guidance/clarity around these processes is still in process.

[35] Important to mention that SCE has across the board opted against printing any materials and disseminating exclusively digitally.

should allow SCE country and global level to make more accurate strategic choices on what is demonstrating success and what is sustainable, replicable, effective, efficient, relevant.

In relation to the understanding and use of "outcome" versus "output":

- The term "output" should be applied to graduating training for employment and entrepreneurship
- The term "outcome" should be applied to the results of that training, be it employment, increased salary, business launch or profit.
- "Outcome" when describing completion of formal education or life-skills can be used as attainment of core knowledge and skills, which can be an objective in itself and therefore not monetized.

The quite recently implemented post graduate survey will certainly contribute to evidence outcomes in terms of the effectiveness of the training to contribute to change. In this regard, SCE should not only improve monitoring of outcomes and follow-up with graduates on their success in applying their new knowledge, but should also proactively support beneficiaries to use their new skills and training benefits to generate sustainable incomes.

The inclusion of definitions for each indicator in the latest Logical Framework is an important improvement that will inhibit own interpretations and contribute substantially to data quality, comparability and aggregation. Nevertheless, there is still room to revise the definitions of "outcome" and "output" and to improve the indicators to further capture women's voices and perceptions, as well as gender transformative changes related to the Programme. Some examples:

- Output 1.2 talks about "relevant and appropriate content", but how are relevance and appropriateness defined and evaluated?
- Output 2.2 refers to improved livelihoods but does not address related key decision-making issues, for example, who decides how the increased income generated by women will be used?
- Output 2.4 could benefit from feedback-evaluation of the mentored mentees.
- Indicator 3.3.1. refers to changes in the empowerment/agency SCE survey questions; these questions are currently the following:

Illustration 4-2: Self-Perception Questions related to Agency & Empowerment

From the start, it seemed important to better connect the agency and empowerment questions to the income and educational goals and premises of the Programme. For example, the Programme document has as a premise that "educated women are more likely to be healthier, have higher earnings and exercise greater decision-making

power within the household". So, beyond personal decisions, do women perceive changes in terms of their participation in family decisions? If women successfully achieved employment/income improvements, did this somehow imply decisions and greater attention related to their health? The 2023 entrance and graduate survey have addressed this issue by asking in both surveys the same questions on household decision-making described above, which now allows comparison of the changes resulting from participation in the Programme.

- Output 3.3 refers to "potential employers in the private, public and NGO sector becoming more gender-aware and gender-transformative", but the definition of the indicator is not precise enough, for example, is the distinction between "gender-aware", "gender-sensitive" and "gender-transformative" clear enough?
- Indicator 4.1.1. refers to the "number of needs assessments carried out with a gender perspective to identify barriers, solutions, gaps and opportunities for potential Programme participants". Does the Programme have a shared understanding of what a "gender perspective" implies and how it is operationalized? This also relates to the point on output 3.3.

An important general question is to what extent are the definitions of outcomes, outputs and indicators consistently gender-transformative, based on a shared understanding of gender and empowerment?

In general, the indicators and the data collected in the surveys have been strengthened to further inform about the transformative potential of the model, including assessing the barriers and often "sacrifices" that women face to participate in the Programme; the entry survey does assess whether women that are enrolling have childcare provisions for their dependants or difficulties in the matter (even though it does ask about number of dependants). The July 2022 graduate survey[36] asked to 171 beneficiaries "what made attending the course difficult?" and one of the response options was "too busy looking after children". Only 35 women chose this option, however these are graduates that already found the solutions. Furthermore, graduates are, by definition, the ones that found the way to solve obstacles to be able to complete the Programme, thus not the best candidates to report on barriers to enrolment and completion. The "obstacles faced" questions asked in all 3 surveys implemented in 2023 were agreed on to expand and replace the earlier question on "what made attending the course difficult?" This broader questioning importantly enables for comparisons over time. This can strengthen Programme response to further create enabling conditions that respond to women's already challenging situations, including financial difficulties, care responsibilities and family labour obligations that are the three main obstacles captured in the 2023 surveys.

To gather information and address the barriers participants face, and capture changes due to the Programme, a question was added in the new surveys about the obstacles women face to achieve their goals. In Mexico, some relevant positive results were:

- "Lack of economic resources" was identified as an obstacle by 46% at entrance but only by 27% at exit.
- At entrance 24% women considered "lack of self- confidence" as an obstacle, but the percentage decreased to 13% at exit.

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[36] Not found for 2023.

On the other hand, current outcomes, outputs and indicators do not fully reflect the contribution of the "gender transformative life skills" component of the model. As described in the SCE Signature Features' publications, this component addresses awareness of participants' strengths and the potential of all individuals, and how gendered roles, stereotypes and discriminatory norms play a role in everyone's lives. As described in the same document, "gender-transformative life skills are context-specific and attempt to address intersecting inequalities. This training may provide the opportunity for participants to revisit, adapt or change established attitudes, behaviours and practices at individual, household and community level, often resulting in participants". While it is clear that responses need to be context-specific, the general framework and definition – related to the question about a shared conceptual framework for gender transformation and empowerment- needs to be the same, and ultimately outcome indicators need to reflect the same achievements, for example in terms of greater participation and influence in family decisions, greater attention to one's own wellbeing and health, etc. So, while "gender transformative life skills" are a starting point and imply own and specific achievement indicators, it is also important to connect them with the expected outcomes and related outputs and indicators. This is important to consider when reviewing the ToC.

A very valuable exercise based on FGDs was recently undertaken with the objective "to showcase qualitatively the transformative change that SCE generates in women's lives in selected areas which are generally not captured by quantitative indicators. Prove SCE's transformative potential in an organized structure." The qualitative data demonstrates women's transformations in the following areas: Self-confidence, Networks, Social Norms, Agency and Self-reliance, Personal Growth, Gender Relations, Respect and Recognition from others, Economic Self-reliance, Appetite to Continue Learning, Value as a Woman not mother-wife. Furthermore, recent survey data also evidences self-perceptions on agency and empowerment. Interesting to highlight that the statement that reveals most change refers to control over all personal decisions, with 13%.

Illustration 4-3: Self-Perceptions on Agency & Empowerment
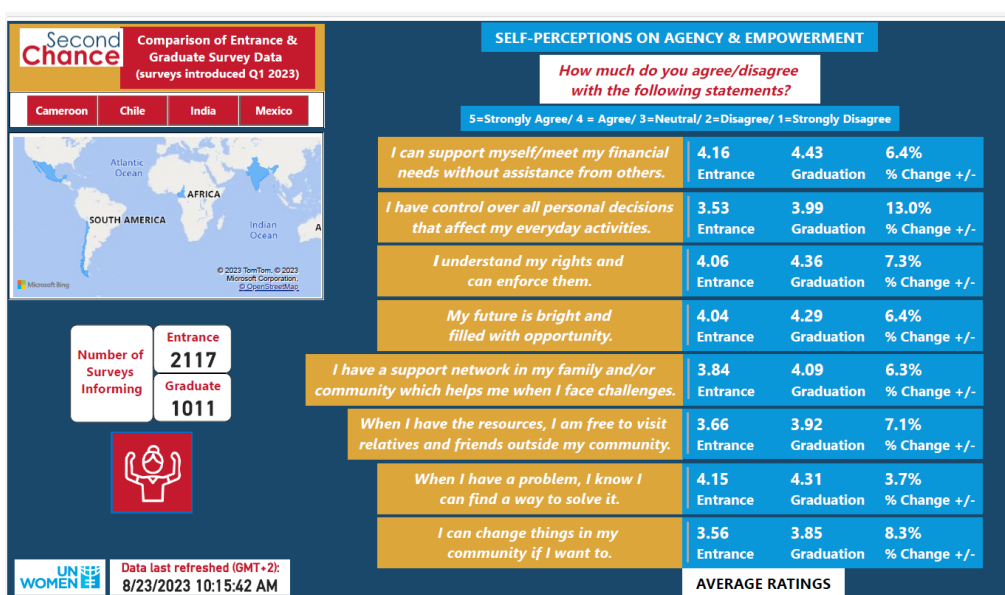
It is an imperative to integrate these dimensions of gender-transformative changes, which are simultaneously independent achievements and success factors, in the revised Programme design and Theory of Change for Phase II.

The more recent implementation of the post graduate surveys, an improvement in progress, will enhance the capacity of the Programme to evidence its contribution to women's economic (and general) empowerment and opportunities form a gender-transformative approach.

Beyond data collection, data analysis is required to develop useful information within country Programme activities, implementing party offices, COs, and SCE global level management. There are still some gaps at global and national level between collected and analysed data, and most important, between existing data and its effective utilization. However, it is important to highlight that the Programme has responded to these gaps by providing a whole suite of Power BI reports tied to the revised surveys that are filterable by country and have been shared with all country and programming staff for utilization. In addition, countries have made substantive improvements towards evidence-based decision making, strengthening their M&E systems and practice. For example, in Mexico even counterparts are already integrating results with feedback and analysis in their reports to help strengthen Programme actions in each context. Based on the improvements, the Programme yet has to fully define and implement its organizational learning and knowledge management strategy.

> F7. General performance, in terms of outcome and output achievements at global and country level, presents important variations and alerts about potentially misleading conclusions that for example aggregated global data can lead to if specific country behaviours are not considered.

The table below presents an analysis of the outcome and output achievements at global and country level.

OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS	Global			Australia			Cameroon			Chile			India			Jordan			Mexico		
	Target	Actual (2023)	Achievement	Tar	Act	Ach	Tar	Act	Ach	Tar	Act	Ach	Tar	Act	Ach	Tar	Act	Ach	Tar	Act	Ach
OUTCOME 1																					
Learners Enrolled	66.500	65 500	98%	2.500	2.899	116%	12.000	12.708	106%	4.000	7.878	197%	40.000	31.271	78%	3.000	2.239	75%	5.000	8.505	170%
E-Learning Platform Available	Yes	Yes	100%	Yes	Yes	100%	Yes	Yes	100%	Yes	Yes	100%	Yes	Yes	100%	Yes	Yes	100%	Yes	Yes	100%
Courses Curated	21	669	3186%	6	382	6367%	2	119	5950%	3	80	2667%	3	15	500%	2	4	200%	5	69	1380%
% Completing Online Learning	75%	81%	108%	80%	26%	33%	100%	5%	5%	70%	62%	89%	70%	90%	129%	80%	100%	125%	80%	91%	114%
Online Learning Registrants	23.620	40.398	171%	2.467	2.500	101%	120	129	108%	4.000	7.878	197%	9.000	19.053	212%	3.000	2.239	75%	5.000	8.632	173%
Users Completing Online Learning	17.620	32.838	186%	2.000	639	32%	120	6	5%	2.800	4.845	173%	6.300	17.241	274%	2.400	2.239	93%	4.000	7.868	197%
Learning Hubs Established	44	85	193%	4	19	475%	5	22	440%	5	9	180%	12	12	100%	6	8	133%	12	15	125%
Hub Partnerships Established	70	159	227%	10	8	80%	5	85	1700%	8	13	163%	25	24	96%	5	3	60%	17	26	153%
OUTCOME 2																					
Graduates Earning Income	17.500	34.423	197%	2.000	494	25%	1.400	3.926	280%	1.000	2.610	261%	8.500	23.725	279%				4.000	3.631	91%
Strengthened Government Capacity	26	42	162%	4	0	0%	4	23	575%	2	4	200%	4	4	100%				8	11	138%
Gender Responsive Employment Policies	16	18	113%	1	0	0%	1	1	100%	1	1	100%	4	5	125%				8	11	138%
% of Graduates Mentoring	23%	9%	39%	20%	18%	90%	20%	3%	15%	21%	20%	95%	29%	6%	21%		%		20%	24%	120%
Graduates Mentoring Others	7.910	3.152	40%	400	350	88%	2.310	380	16%	600	565	94%	3.000	654	22%				1.000	1.191	119%
Graduates	34.850	48.156	138%	2.000	2.805	140%	11.550	4.271	37%	2.800	4.845	173%	10.500	28.243	269%	3.000	2.239	75%	5.000	5.753	115%
OUTCOME 3																					
National Education Plans	6	6	100%	1	0	0%	1	1	100%	1	2	200%	1	2	200%	1	0	0%	1	1	100%
Community Spaces for Change	33	73	221%	2	4	200%	2	19	950%	2	5	250%	12	12	100%	4	18	450%	11	15	136%
Awareness & Advocacy Campaigns	13	187	1438%	3	32	1067%	2	19	950%	2	9	450%	2	123	6150%	2	2	100%	2	2	100%
Community Activities Conducted	35	5.868	16766%	1	1	100%	1	7	700%	1	2	200%	12	5.610	46750%	6	4	67%	14	244	1743%

Peer Networks Established	21	190	905%	1	6	600%	4	8	200%	4	8	200%	4	75	1875%	4	8	200%	4	84	2100%
OUTCOME 4																					
Legislative Policies Developed	9	23	256%	1	4	400%	1	1	100%	1	7	700%	4	3	75%				1	8	800%
SCE Needs Assessments	6	6	100%	1	1	100%	1	1	100%	1	1	100%	1	1	100%				1	1	100%
Policy Dialogues	26	114	438%	1	9	900%	6	3	50%	3	16	533%	4	9	225%				6	77	1283%
SCE Budgetary Allocations	6	2	33%	1	0	0%	1	0	0%	1	1	100%	1	1	100%				1	0	0%

Source: Own elaboration with data from OriginaL SCE Logframe (M&E Logframe Report - Y5Q4 Grads corrected; M&E Logframe Report - Y4Q4 - 30 June 2022; Original SCE ME Logframe_Y5Q4 23 Aug 23).

Note 1: Blue (exceeded), green (accomplished), yellow (in progress), red (critical).

Note 2: As a special case, Jordan has implemented the Programme focusing only on outcomes 1 and 3. Outcomes 2 and 4 were therefore not covered for this specific country.

The table shows some outcomes with problems in achieving their targets, specifically some indicators of Outcomes 2 and 4 are below half of their targets (between 0% and 40% compliance). As for Outcome 2, three countries (Australia, Cameroon, and India) show a low level of achievement of results in two or more indicators. In this specific outcome for instance, Australia has, among other indicators, very low levels of graduates earning and income compared with its target, mainly due to the strong impact of COVID-19 in certain industries like tourism and retail, which has led to constraints on employment pathways. In Cameroon on the other hand, the relatively low number of graduates seems to be partly explained as a reporting issue: only women who had taken part in long-term training were considered as graduates, while those who had participated in short-term trainings were not. Otherwise in India, the implementing partner PRADAN uses the services of community members (women and men) to mentor and support the SCE beneficiary women, which explains the lower number of graduate mentors compared to the target.

Regarding Outcome 4, three countries had no progress or were below the targets in one or more indicators (Australia, Cameroon and Mexico). This situation is mainly due to misinterpretation of indicators, the absence or delay of advocacy, discussions and budget allocations at national levels, which specifically target the SCE Programme.

In general, comparing the percentages of achievements at the global level (consolidated data for all countries) versus those achieved at the country level, there are significant distortions. That is to say, some percentages of achievement at the global level conceal the fact that some countries did not achieve acceptable compliance in some indicators, especially Outcomes 2 and 4, and to a lesser extent in Outcomes 1 and 3.

On the other hand, a look at the achievement of targets by country shows three countries with fewer goals achieved: Australia and Cameroon have not achieved significant progress in 7 indicators, while Jordan has not achieved significant progress in 1 indicator (under outcomes 1 and 3 exclusively); Chile has made significant progress in all indicators, and Mexico and India in almost all indicators.

The Australia case highlights an important design flaw. It was understood from the outset that as UN Women does not have an office in Australia, and as Australia is a high-income country context, UN Women could not directly engage in providing inputs to the National Education Plan, work on government capacity, a gender responsive employment policy or seek budgetary allocations. Engagement in policy dialogues at federal and state level was possible due to IPs/RPs taking the lead on these dialogues and UN Women contributing as a partner, rather than UN Women taking the lead. This, in connection with the value-for-money suggested analysis, can have important implication for the selection of countries for Phase II.

F8. While Outcome 1 ("more marginalized women and young women access and benefit from high quality educational content, material and learning pathways") reached its targets at the global level, it is important to acknowledge and understand differences at country-level performance, their meanings and implications.

In relation to Outcome 1, the total number of learners enrolled until June 2023 was 65,500. Roughly 100% learners' enrolment target was achieved at global level, reaching a final 98% of the planned target in year 5.

Graphic 4-1: Total number of learners enrolled (2018 - 2023)
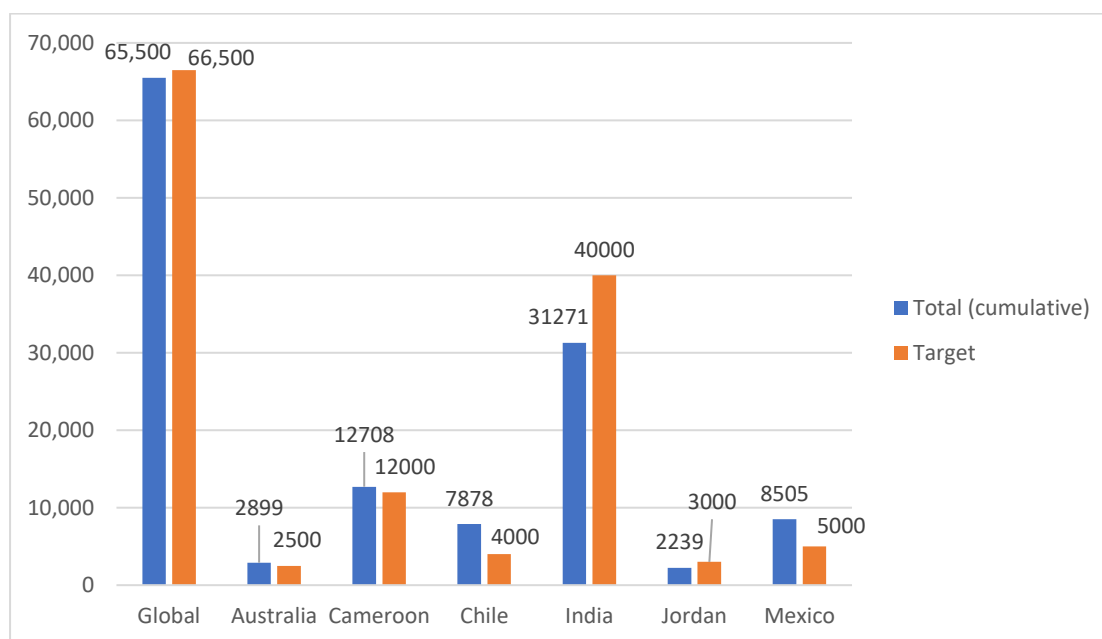
Source: Own elaboration with data from Original SCE Logframe (M&E Logframe Report - Y5Q4)).

In terms of individual countries, four countries have exceeded their targets, with Chile reaching 187% of its original target and Mexico 170%. Differences in the other two countries are not so large, with Australia reporting 116% achievement and Cameroon 105%. In relation to the two countries that reported underachievement, for Jordan the percentage is 74% and for India 78%. In terms of numbers of participants, globally the Programme has reached 1,000 less women than planned, which is not a significant difference. However, Chile and Mexico have reached 7383 more participants than initially planned, while India's under achievement represents 8729 participants less than expected.

While the global result for Outcome 1 seems satisfying, further analysis is needed to fully understand what the data is reflecting; for example, how relevant and meaningful is a certain achievement – beyond over or underachievement- in a specific context, in relation to the size of the population, the needs, etc. How transformative are the results at individual, family, community and social level?

Country disparities are also important and global data can be misleading if these are not taken into account. The idea underlying "global success" is that all countries achieve their tailored targets – assuming there is a solid, evidence-based projection of targets during design- and this should not be substituted by some countries over performance and a global positive average. So, it is important to consider if the defined targets were not too low, globally and/or for the cases of Mexico and Chile that have by far exceeded theirs target. Overachievement can actually express weaknesses in the design phase, but it is important to note that the Programme extensions also influenced overachievements. Data quality and trustworthiness, issues on which the Programme has been dedicating particular attention and efforts to improve, can also imply some distortions and biases.

Graphic 4-2: Comparison of targets achieved at global and country level (Outcome 1, output 1.2): Number/percentage of users completing online courses)
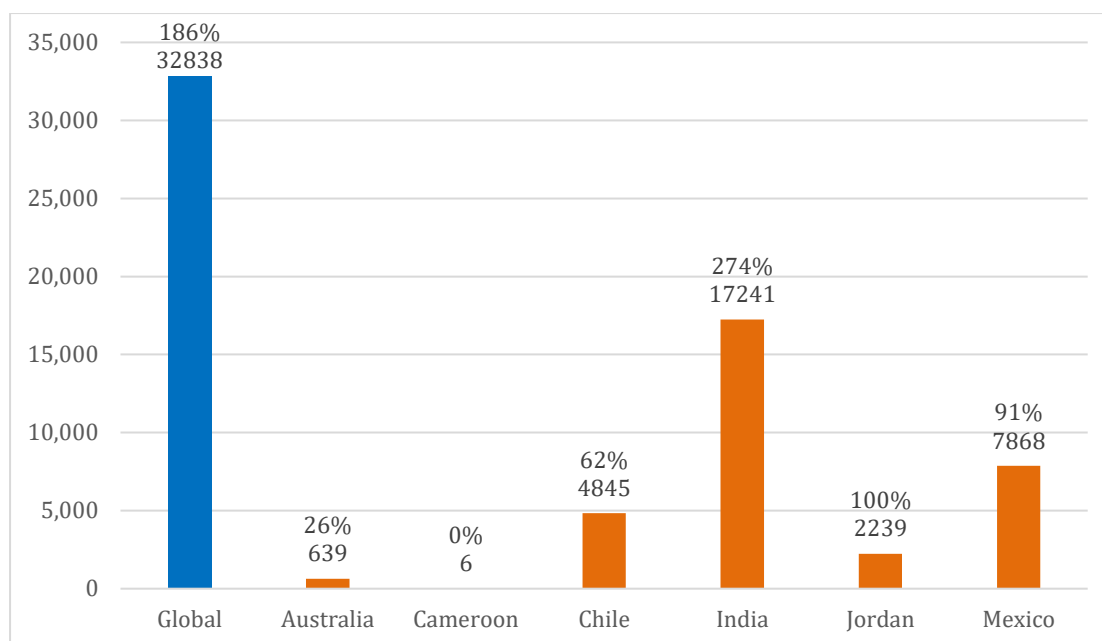
Source: Own elaboration with data from OriginaL SCE Logframe (_Y5Q4 23 Aug 23).

As shown in the graph above, the analysis of two outputs selected from Outcome 1 (% completing Online Learning and Users Completing Online Learning), shows more relevant country disparities (in comparison to learners enrolment), with Australia and Cameroon performing very poor in meeting their national targets, in comparison to India that presents high overperformance with 274% -which means 10941 more users completing the online course than initially planned- and that definitively influences the global achievement. Important to note that SCE India trained 10000 nurses online during COVID-19. Underachievement in Australia and Cameroon relate to the rural or suburban origin of the participants and the digital gap. In the case of Chile, the achievement is also low with 62%; yet, while completion rates have gradually improved in Chile, it is important take into account that comparisons of these results with those from other countries should be taken with caution, as the Programme in Chile is entirely online. Jordan achieved its target and Mexico was close to it. In general, to enhance valid and meaningful comparability, there is a need for standardized definitions of online learning and online courses. For example, comparing Chile completion rates (which reflect completion rates for the entire Programme) with Jordan completion rates (which reflect the completion of some hours' work on Kolibri) does not tell us much about the relative effectiveness or quality of each.

Beyond global achievement, the range of results at country level beyond enrolment evidences variable country-level effectiveness, alerts about the need to revise the country selection criteria, process and assumptions, analyse the capacity of the Programme to design and address national diversity in terms of outcome and output-oriented performance, revise indicators that may not be relevant at least for some countries, and further develop shared understandings of indicators to ensure clarity and comparability beyond context specificities, something already undertaken in the latest logframe.

On the impact of COVID-19 on Outcome 1 achievements, the graph below shows a greater impact in some countries, as in the case of Cameroon, where after a very steep increase in learners enrolled (the highest from all participating countries), from year 3 onwards, there is a downward trend with little recovery during years 4 and 5. In Chile and Mexico there is a lesser impact on the numbers achieved until year 4, while Australia and Jordan had not achieved significant enrolment. Understanding the influential factors and mitigating measures that determined the specific trends and results in each country, is important to learn and enhance country readiness for risk management.

Graphic 4-3: Outcome 1 - Output 1.1: Learners enrolled - Annual achievement
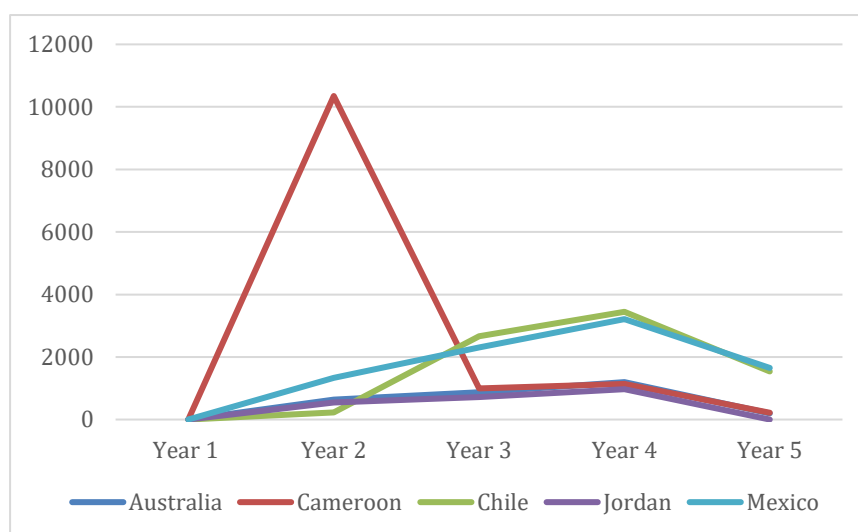
Source: Own elaboration with data from Original SCE ME Logframe_Y5Q4 23 Aug 23.
Note: India is not shown in this graph because, due to reporting issues and updated date, it is not possible to disaggregate the number of learners enrolled per year. Nevertheless, India has reported a peak during COVID-19 times since 10.000 nurses were trained.

On another topic, it is interesting to note that the number of learners following life skills (including digital skills) courses (78,864) triples the learners following employment/vocational skills pathway and the self-employment and entrepreneurship pathway (both have very similar numbers around 24000). In response to this trend, SCE has turned this into a Signature Feature called Gender Transformative Life Skills (GTLS), which is expected to be a foundational mandatory component for Phase II, included in any of the pathways as well as a stand-alone offer for participants who won't be following any of the other three pathways thus cannot become graduates and they would be GTLS completers.

The "return to education" pathway only reports 6914 learners, approximately 30% of the other two pathways. The 2023 graduate survey showed that India had the highest percentage (19%) of graduates that had taken a "return to formal education" course. It is important to note that in Q2 (Y5*), GTLS courses were identified as the priority focal area for SCE course development. The underlying rationale according to the 2023 Annual Report, was that they were the least likely to be offered by other vocational training programmes and mainstream content providers, and that they provide an essential foundation for SCE participant outcomes in that they give women the focus, confidence and sense of agency that they need to flourish in whatever learning pathway they choose. Australia defined the gender transformative life skills

courses as the most important aspect of the Programme in the country because of the transformative impact on the participants.

F9. In relation to Outcome 2 ("more marginalized women and young women benefit from increased employment, livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities"), the global target was achieved. However, there are important differences between country achievements and evidence is limited to understand the extent to which marginalized women have benefited from increased employment, livelihoods and entrepreneurial opportunities as a result of the implementation of the Programme, and the transformational implications of such opportunities in their lives.

In relation to graduates earning income, the general conclusion is that Outcome 2 was accomplished. Cameroon, Chile and India present overachievements that almost triple the established targets. Mexico reports 91% and Australia a very low 25%. The global percentage is 197%, almost doubling the initial target. Greater enrolment, online training and increased focus on entrepreneurship, underly overachievements. The very limited achievement of Australia is mainly related to the impact of COVID-19 on the hospitality, tourism and retail sectors. Reflections on the interpretation of the results presented under finding 8 also apply here.

Graphic 4-4: Comparison of targets achieved at global and country level (Outcome 2)
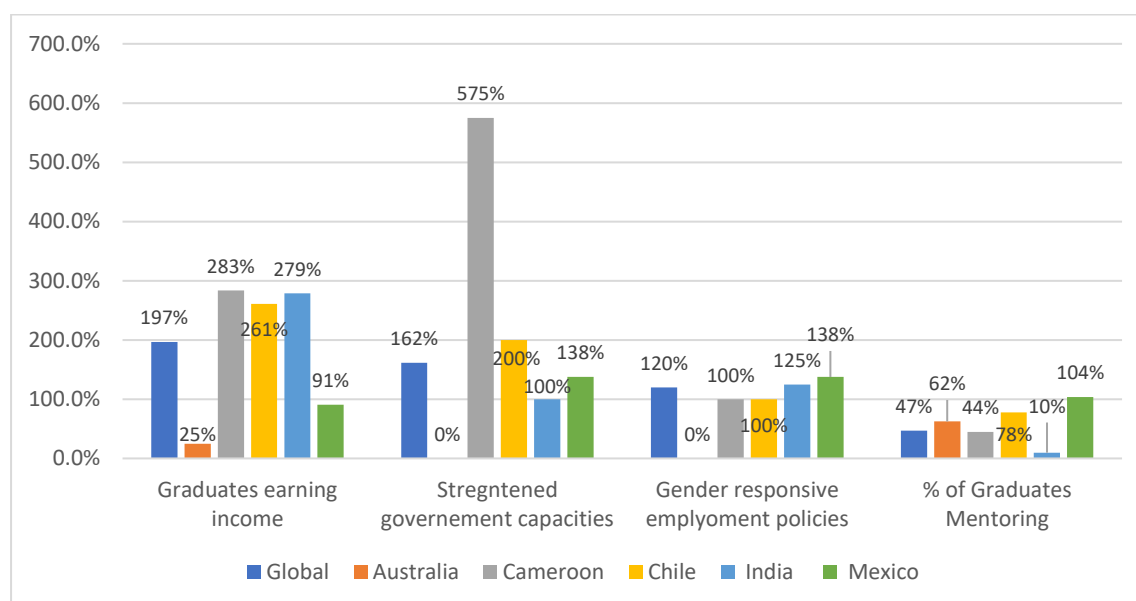
Source: Own elaboration with data from OriginaL SCE Logframe (M&E Logframe Report - Y5Q4 Grads corrected; M&E Logframe Report - Y4Q4 - 30 June 2022; Original SCE ME Logframe_Y5Q4 23 Aug 23).

With relation to the percentage of graduates mentoring others, only a global 47% was achieved, with India achieving a very low 10%, and Mexico scoring the highest with 104%. In India the IPs/RPs use community people to mentor and support the SCE beneficiary women which accounts for the low number of graduate mentors. In general, mentors' training and networks are key factors that have contributed to move towards the expected targets, while distance and unexpected costs (e.g. transportation) limited the achievements.

On the other hand, the results of Cameroon in relation to strengthened government capacities are almost six times the established target. With the exception of Australia that reports no achievement, a situation related to the lack of official presence that limited work with government to IPs/RPs, all the other countries have greatly exceeded their targets. The resulting global percentage is 162%.

All countries with the exception of Australia, reached and some exceeded their targets in achieving gender responsive employment policies.

In terms of numbers, the following graph shows the achievements at global and country level in relation to government capacities and gender responsive employment policies.

Graphic 4-5: Number of government entities that have strengthened capacity to integrate gender-responsive actions into employment strategies and programmes, with UN Women's support, and are hiring more women than previously
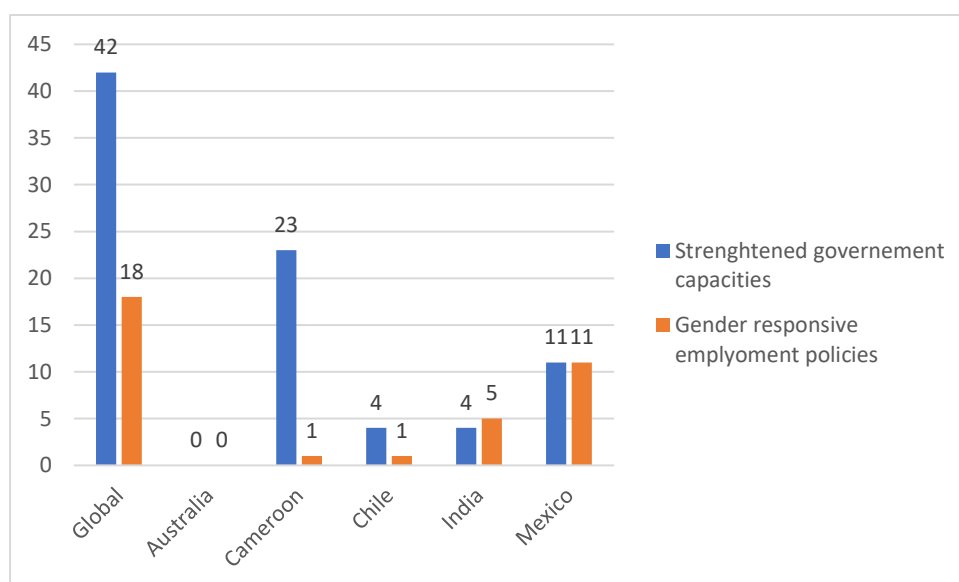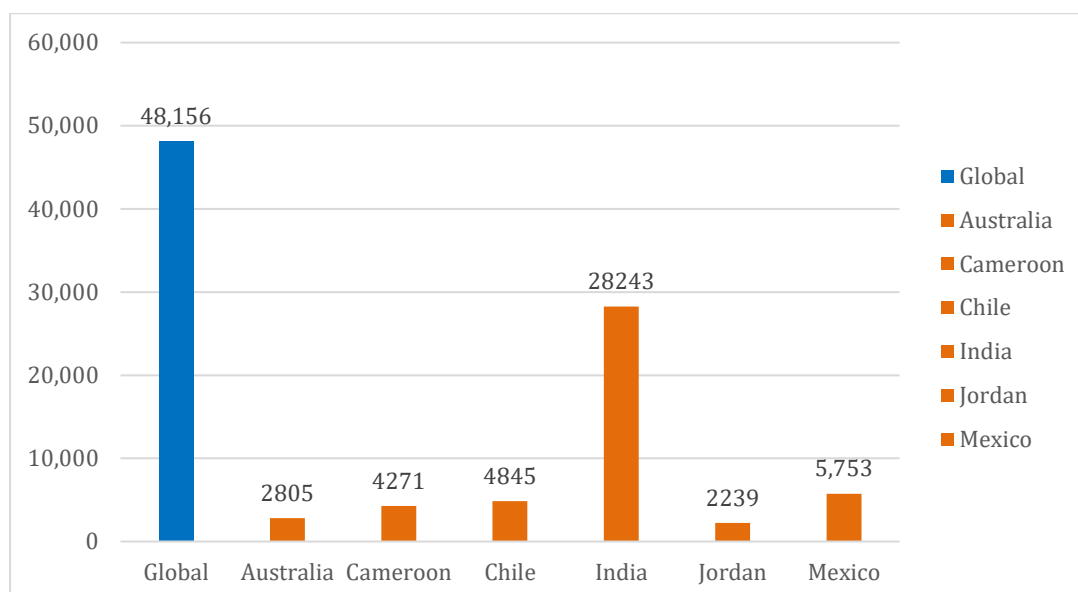

Source: Own elaboration with data from M&E Logframe Report – Y5Q4

In terms of the number of graduates, the total number (June 2023) was 48,156, so 73% of the enrolled women graduated. Of the total of graduated women, 58% corresponds to India and 12% to Mexico, followed by 10% for Chile.

Graphic 4-6: Total number of graduates by country (2018 - 2023)

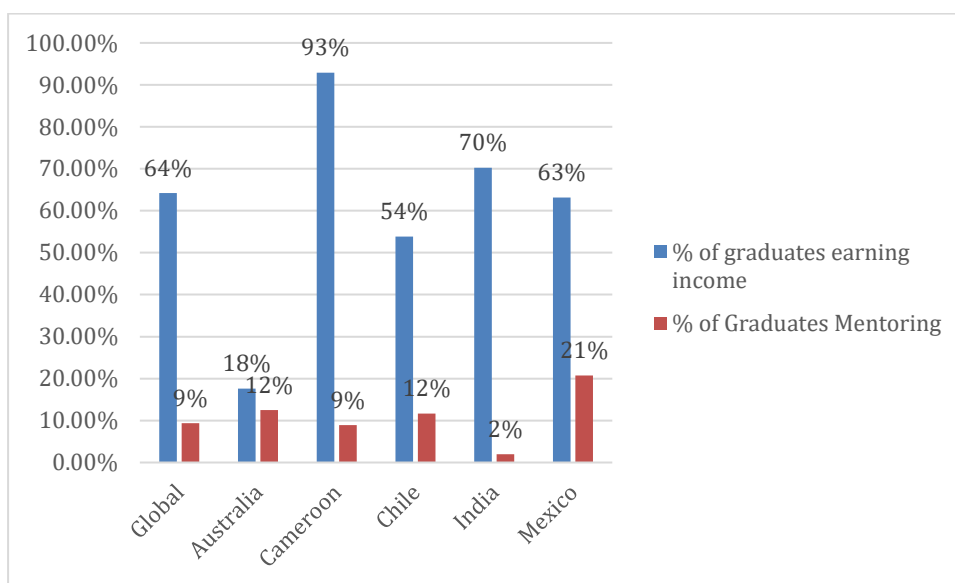Source: Own elaboration with data from M&E Logframe Report – Y5Q4

The global results for the number of graduates represent 138% in relation to the "number of graduates" target, very close to the 140% for Australia, followed by Mexico with 115%. The greatest overachievement is however for India with 269%, attributed to the Programme extension and its online modality that was mostly used to train around 10 000 nurses during COVID-19, thus particularly short and focused online training that targeted a very specific set of skills. Jordan otherwise, achieved 75% of its initial target for number of graduates. Cameroon with 37% of its target achieved is the country with the lowest performance related to this indicator. Important to note that CO clarified that beneficiaries considered as graduates were only those that took part in long-term training, excluding those that took part in short-term courses even if they were able to generate income[37].

The graph next shows the percentage of graduates earning income, also presenting important disparities. At global level, the percentage of graduates earning income is 64%, which represents 30,820 women. In Cameroon almost all graduates were earning income, while in Australia the 18% represents only 504 people. How does this impact the transformational potential of the Programme? – Important to remember that for Australia the life skills training was assessed as the most transformational Programme contribution.

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[37] "Rand interview-Explanations for targets unmet/surpassed"

Graphic 4-7: % Of graduates earning income + % of graduates mentoring (in relation to the total number of graduates)

Source: Own elaboration with data from M&E Logframe Report – Y5Q4

The information above also presents the percentage of graduates mentoring. In general, and reconfirming what was analysed before, the percentage is very low and the strategy and its assumptions need to be revised.

In relation to the impact of COVID-19 on the achievement of Outcome 2 targets, the data below for output 2.1 also evidences differentiated country situations. According to exiting data, India was most impacted since year 3, after having experienced a steep increase.

Graphic 4-8: Outcome 2 - Output 2.1: Graduates Earning Income - Annual achievement
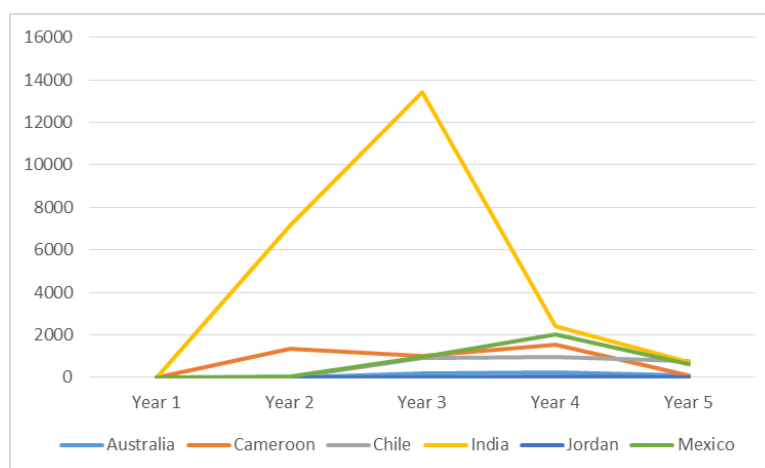
Source: Own elaboration with data from Original SCE ME Logframe_Y5Q4 23 Aug 23.

With respect to the 2023 graduate surveys[38]:

- In terms of young women, 27% of the graduates that responded to the surveys were between 20 and 30 years old, and 6% younger than 20. India is the country with the highest percentage of young graduates (younger than 30) with 80%, followed by Cameroon with 69%.

- 14% of the graduate survey respondents reported to be unemployed, followed by 15% self-declared as housewife-caregiver and 8% unpaid work. In relation to self-employment, in the case of Chile 41% of the 169 responses corresponded to self-employed, and in the case of Mexico 17% of the 680 responses. For the category "now employed", there is a 19% for Mexico and 31% for India.
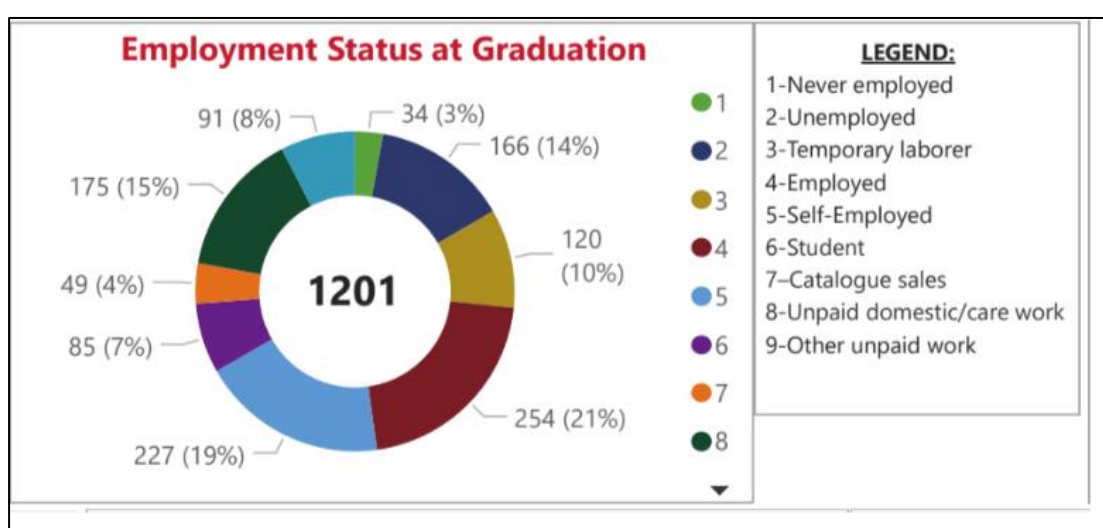
Graphic 4-9: Employment situation of graduates July 2023 – Global results

Source: Own elaboration with information of the 2023 graduate survey.
Note: Australia and Jordan are not included in these data

While entrance surveys are the optimal baseline for measuring changes attributable to the Programme, and graduate surveys indicate the direction of the transformation for some participants, post-graduate surveys will increasingly contribute with evidence on economic empowerment in terms of income and employment results.

Back to the Outcome 2, the Programme has contributed to generate employment, livelihoods and entrepreneurial opportunities for the participants and for most countries with overachievements, while an assessment of the numbers is also important to understand the dimension of the achievement and its potential transformational impact in a given context. COVID-19 was an inhibitor and disproportionately affected effectiveness in Australia in terms of employment opportunities. Results related to policies and government capacities are also positive. The mentoring strategy is still a challenging one for all countries and is reflected in the

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[38] is important, noting that of the 1,205 total graduate surveys conducted in 2023, 53% correspond to Mexico, 28% to India, 14% to Chile and 2% to Cameroon (Australia and Jordan were not part of this survey due to limited/reduced programming in 2023).

low percentages (approximately 50%) achieved in relation to the country targets, and even the very low percentages achieved in relation to the number of graduates.

EQ3. To what extent has the Programme contributed to create an enabling environment in terms of social norms, financing, legislations and policy frameworks, to achieve the expected objectives and outcomes?

F10. Countries report successfully about efforts and achievements related to Outcomes 3 and 4. However, available data and indicators are not sufficient to ensure a shared understanding of these outcomes and fully endorse the relevance and contribution of the achievements to Programme effectiveness so far.

From a global Programme perspective, questions remain about the overall understanding and strategic vision of the corresponding outcomes 3[39] and 4[40] (and related evidence), the extent of the Programme's contribution, and the institutionalization and transformative potential of the relevant legal, policy and community frameworks and spaces. Nevertheless, the definitions recently included in the logframe certainly contribute to a common understanding and approach, with positive consequences for data quality, comparability and aggregation.

In relation to achievement of Outcome 3, evidence supporting this outcome (including indicators) is not very strong and clear. Only 4 (Chile, Mexico, Cameroon an India) of the 6 countries report having national plans and strategies to address social norms, attitudes and behaviour transformation; the relationship with, and the attribution/ contribution of the Programme to the achievements is not always very clear in terms of what exactly the Programme has done or how determinant it was to ensure the achievements, though in some countries focus on advocacy and transforming legal and policy frameworks has been a priority. For example, in India under SCE Programme UN Women's technical support to the National Institute for Open Schooling contributed to the launch of the Inclusive Education Policy on September 8, 2022. This is a comprehensive policy document of recommendations to guide all Open Schools across India to ensure inclusion and equitable access to all students with their diversities, using a multi-pronged, multi-disciplinary and technology-enabled, flexible education system

In 2023, countries also reported having 73 community spaces addressing attitude and behavioural change and 6 empowerment hubs in refugee centres. Until 2022, these were only 57 and 4 respectively, showing clear progress in the creation of these spaces. The SCE hubs provide a holistic range of assistance in accessing services such as housing, gender-based violence response etc., which are fundamental in removing the multi-faceted barriers confronted by disadvantaged women. The key is to leverage partnerships to provide the services needed to enable and facilitate the participation of women in the Programme.

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[39] Fewer marginalized women and young women are disadvantaged and denied education opportunities due to harmful and discriminatory social norms.

[40] More marginalized women and young women have improved access to education and employment pathways through enhanced multi-sectoral policy and financing frameworks that enabling scaling of successful SCE solutions.

Graphic 4-10: Total number of Community Spaces for Change (2023)
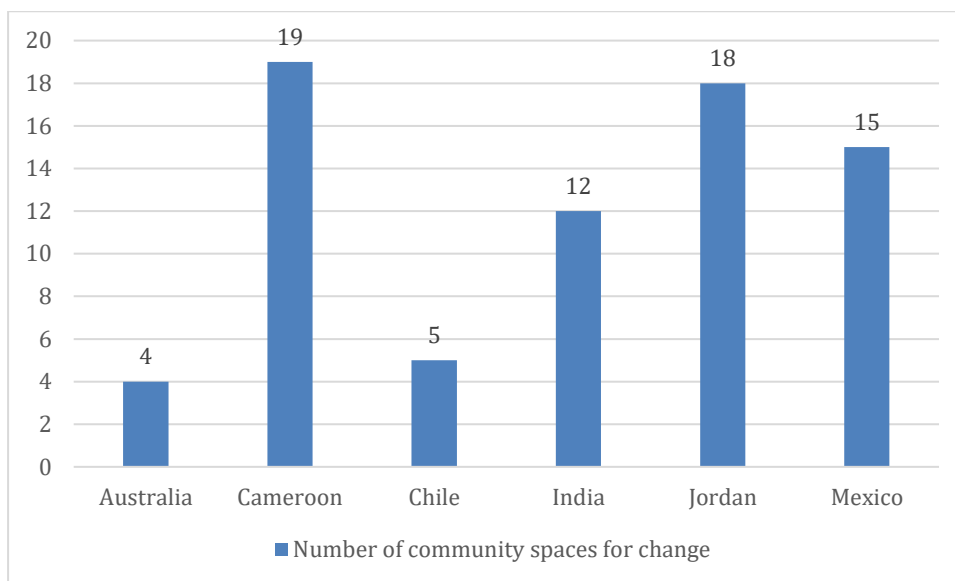
Source: Own elaboration with data from M&E Logframe Report – Y5Q4 –July 2023.

Also, the engagement with men and communities on changing social norms that stop women from accessing education and employment is particularly key to results as demonstrated by the SCE Mexico and SCE Cameroon local models. SCE Mexico has held 14 workshops and trainings on new masculinities, and SCE Cameroon has established community-based mechanisms like men's groups to provide support to women. Currently the Programme lacks a shared approach on why and how to work with men/masculinities.

In relation to Outcome 4, with the exception of Jordan and important differences in the individual numbers (Mexico 8, Chile 7, Australia 4, India 3 and Cameroon 1), countries reported a total of 19 new, revised or in active review/discussion legislative frameworks or policies that promote second chance education and vocational training opportunities for women developed and/or being implemented in Programme countries.

Graphic 4-11: Number of new, revised or in active review/discussion legislative frameworks or policies that promote second chance education and vocational training opportunities for women developed and/or being implemented in Programme countries
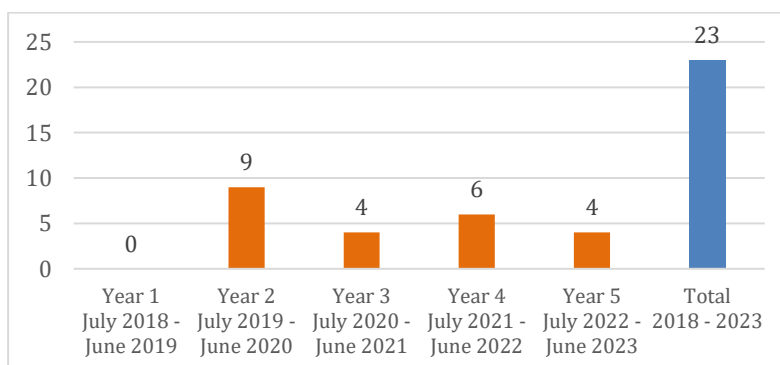

Note: Jordan is not included in these data as it does not cover outcome 4.

It is important to consider that in 2023 only Chile and India reported achievements related to the following indicator: "Number of countries that have, with UN-Women's support, revised budget frameworks in favour of marginalized young women's access to second chance vocational training". A related observation and alert are that this indicator could not be found in the new logframe. While the challenge of influencing budget allocation is clear, removing the indicator is considered a setback given the importance of budget allocation to really install any changes and ensure implementation.

A focused analysis of output 4.2 on policy dialogues shows that some countries have managed to considerably improve their achievements during last year (1 July 2022 - 30 June 2023): Although Chile and Australia had already exceeded their national targets for this output, they have managed to improve progress towards exceeding the target by 900% for Australia and 533% for Chile.

Graphic 4-12: Outcome 4 - Output 4.2: Policy Dialogues - Annual achievement
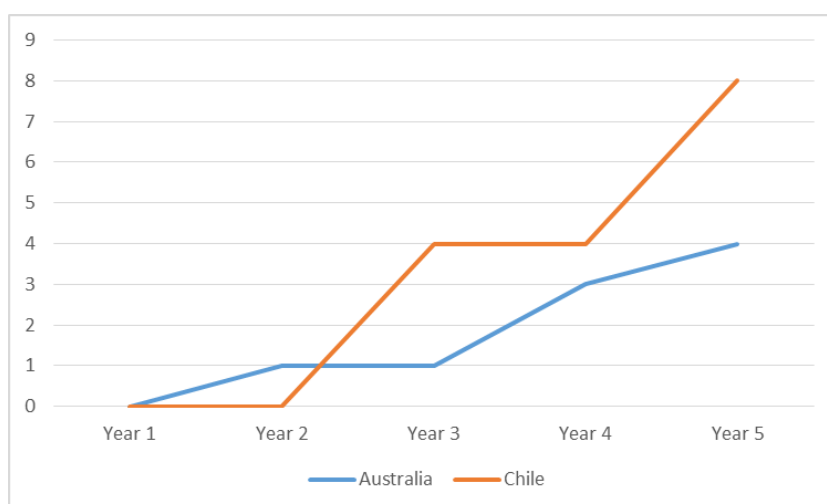
Source: Own elaboration with data from Original SCE ME Logframe_Y5Q4 23 Aug 23.

Wherever possible, policy dialogues at national and local levels contribute to creating enabling environments and enhance the sustainability potential of the initiatives, for example if linked to budgetary allocations.

4.3. EFFICIENCY

EQ4. To which extent has the Programme made good use of its human, financial and administrative resources, taking into account the specific contexts and working conditions, including COVID-19?

F11. Use of financial resources as indicated by budget expenditures suggest more efficiency in achieving Outcome 1, followed by Outcome 2, and to a lesser extent Outcomes 3 and 4.

Country expenditure shows that in almost all countries more budget was spent in the implementation of Outcome 1 related activities, and to a lesser extent in relation to Outcome

2. With respect to the other Outcomes, expenditure fluctuates between 2% and 94% of the allocated budget for Outcome 3, and between 47% and 87% for Outcome 4.

The analysis of the efficiency in the use of financial resources by the six countries shows the following (see Table in the next page):

- All countries except for Mexico, show overspending in financial execution for Outcome 1 (in red). In the cases of Cameroon and Chile the difference is more than 50%, potentially related to their extreme "overachievements" in relation to the Hub Partnerships Established output in the case of Cameroon, and the Curated Course in the case of Chile. Additionally, the methodology of the Programme in Chile implied that the execution of contracts with IPs/RPs also involved elements related to Outcomes 2 and 3, reported as budget execution under Outcome 1.

- Two countries (Australia and Cameroon) show overspending in Outcome 2. On the other hand, 3 countries show low levels of spending in Outcomes 2 (Chile) and 3 (Chile and Jordan). Mexico shows a regular behaviour with high levels of spending for outcomes 2, 3 and 4, and a lower level in outcome 1.

- Expenditure reflects to some extent the greater difficulties in achieving targets related to Outcomes 3 and 4.

- It is important to understand the causes of over and under expenditure (beyond unforeseeable events), to learn for the future and also to be able to provide accurate costs for replication of country models. The primary reason for overspending in Outcomes 1 and 2 was the reallocation of resources within the Programme, as these two outcomes have taken resources that were originally planned for other outcomes, such as Outcome 4. In fact, with the agreement of the donor, and the flexibility that accompanied Phase I, SCE decided to "save" resources from outcome 4, which mainly represented staff salary costs, and allocate these to outcomes 1 and 2, which are directly related to programming activities. In some ways, this can be seen as an efficient process or increase in efficiency, as resources were channelled effectively into programming activities rather than staff costs or management-related activities, in response to the needs of the team.

- Otherwise, over and under expenditure are also related to the specific country models, own administrative systems, and budget execution reporting implications, others reflect too ambitious planning and expected budget allocation. Greater standardization, e.g. guidelines on budget allocation that supersede individual IPs/RPs criteria, are also expected to impact positively on budgeting and expenditure.

- An analysis of the execution of total available resources by country (consolidated figures for all countries for the period analysed) reveals high or acceptable levels of spending in all of them, with data that conceals some distortions (overdrafts or low levels) in spending behaviour. A particular case in point is Chile, which presents a total spending level for the period of 86% of the overall amount available, when it shows a limited performance in spending corresponding to outcomes 3 (2%) and 2 (22%), and barely manages to execute a little more than half of the budget available for Outcome 4 (55%). In this specific case, the distortions in the budget execution figures should be taken with caution, as Chile indicated to have restrictions in its internal administrative and resource management systems when it came to separating expenditures and

reporting budget execution by outcome. Therefore, such distortions seem to be explained, at least in part, by administrative issues rather than actual budget execution.

- In general, it is important to note that financial expenditure and advance liquidation of expenditures of partners' contracts differ at country level and have restrictions to align to outcome and output-based expenditure and reporting; these limitations were shared with the donor and accepted given the pilot nature of Phase I.

In relation to human resources, commitment, quality and high performance of the Programme teams were crucial to determine the Programme success. Staff turnover at country and global level did not strongly affect Programme continuity and implementation. All measures and efforts were deployed particularly by the global team, to support staff transitions at country level, sometimes even filling some gaps transitorily, and preventing negative impacts on the Programme planning and expected achievements. This, however, implied extra work for the global team.

Another important efficiency-related information is that the Programme three non-cost extensions until 2023 (a last extension was approved until December 2024); the pandemic played an important role in slowing down the implementation, achievements and financial delivery levels.

Table 4-2: Budget execution per country up to June 2023

Outcomes	Australia			Cameroon			Chile			India			Jordan			Mexico		
	Total ProDoc budget	Total Expenditure	Balance	Total ProDoc budget	Total Expenditure	Balance	Total ProDoc budget	Total Expenditure	Balance	Total ProDoc budget	Total Expenditure	Balance	Total ProDoc budget	Total Expenditure	Balance	Total ProDoc budget	Total Expenditure	Balance
Outcome 1	1 125 750	1 417 335	126%	231 485	342 136	148%	1 204 578	1 945 691	162%	1 172 314	1 276 434	109%	448 144	467 747	104%	1 483 273	1 047 474	71%
Outcome 2	370 046	445 171	120%	476 806	641 572	135%	357 893	79 017	22%	658 102	437 293	66%	-	-	-	395 550	348 373	88%
Outcome 3	257 697	230 458	89%	56 763	36 810	65%	120 600	2 288	2%	454 382	260 905	57%	183 000	62 260	34%	739 783	698 247	94%
Outcome 4	1 567 507	1 219 192	78%	898 772	419 795	47%	1 829 029	1 009 709	55%	2 178 158	1 744 574	80%	385 000	181 464	47%	1 755 547	1 530 346	87%
Grand total	**3 321 000**	**3 312 156**	**100%**	**1 663 826**	**1 440 313**	**87%**	**3 512 100**	**3 036 704**	**86%**	**4 462 956**	**3 719 208**	**83%**	**1 016 144**	**711 470**	**70%**	**4 374 153**	**3 624 440**	**83%**

Source: Own elaboration with data from SCE finance.
Note: the total amounts correspond to the budget allocation/expenditures per outcome, excluding the support costs in each individual country

F12: Despite limitations in the consideration of country-specific factors, unit costs per graduate reflect important differences in countries and alert about the need to further analyse the Programme approach to most marginalized groups while also maximizing value for money.

The following table shows the relationship between the total expenditure for Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 and the total number of graduates per country, to determine the unit cost invested in each of them.

Table 4-3: Unit cost per graduate in each country up to June 2023

Country	Total expenditure Outcome 1, 2 & 3	Total number of graduates	Unit cost in USD
Australia	2 092 964	2805	746
Cameroon	1 020 518	4271	239
Chile	2 026 996	4845	418
India	1 974 633	28243	70
Jordan	530 006	2239	237
Mexico	2 094 094	5753	364

Source: Own elaboration with data from SCE finance (excel file).
Note 1: This table has been prepared in a simplifying way, only for the purpose of analysing the average cost incurred in strengthening the capacities of women and youth in each country. Therefore, the data are only approximations and do not include differences between countries at the economic level or other context variables.
Note 2: Outcome 4 was excluded as it covers mainly UN Women costs
Note 3: In the specific case of Jordan, the total expenditure only covers outcome 1 and 3.

The resulting information reveals a higher cost of training in Australia, with India having by far the lowest cost among all countries. The cost in India is in fact only 9% of the cost in Australia. While this approach might not consider factors such as context and country economic variables, it highlights the need to consider "value for money" as a criteria to maximize the impact of resources allocated to improve the life of the most disadvantaged. The Phase II of the Programme needs to revise the current strategy to ensure a coherent combination of the leave no one behind approach with value for money, which does challenge less cost-effective interventions to find more efficient strategies to ensure continuity in reaching most marginalized women. This is also part of scalability, expanding outreach/impact with same or less resources.

The capacity to leverage and collaborate with existing projects and programmes of other development actors, including national and local governments, bilateral donors, multilateral organizations and NGOs, is a key factor to enhance efficiency. Leveraging opportunities through partnerships has the potential to leverage financial and human resources for more efficiency. In short, leveraging partnerships aims to optimize the use of existing resources, avoiding unused resources, duplication, unnecessary actions, and maximize the utilization of external knowledge and pre-established opportunities.

While partnerships are part of the Programme key elements, fine tuning its global strategic approach to alliance building and managing, and including leveraging as a core principle, are needed to strengthen successful efficiency, which should look like:

- Capacity to maximize the strength of being global, by creating a model that is more than just the sum of its parts.
- Capacity to harmonize and exploit the resources of the bigger system.

- Capacity to understand the local contexts and adapt to their strengths and opportunities.
- Capacity to choose partners that have enough capacity to support the Programme's ambitions and align with core principles and objectives.

4.4. SUSTAINABILITY

EQ5. Are the results of the Programme sustainable, replicable and scalable?

F13. While advancements in the Programme validation and consolidation are important, and positive strategies and examples provide evidence and guidance, sustainability in terms of continuity (of processes and results so far), replication (of the country models under same or similar conditions, and scaling up (expanding impact at a higher speed and with increased efficiency) still faces important challenges that need to be addressed in the design and implementation of Phase II.

Sustainability is the final step identified in the Programme Design, though it should be more of a crosscutting exit strategy starting day one of the Programme implementation. Global level could provide more guidance for sustainability strategies and countries could also exchange and learn from others based on their experience and current state of the art.

Countries have adapted and validated the various pathways (with different priorities and emphasis), though there is not enough evidence that supports their effectiveness to promote replication and scaling up (some countries have already moved towards policy influence and integration). Furthermore, not all countries have systematized their strategies or implementation, had a clear Theory of Change (even it if is not written) and/or have developed robust sustainability strategies including transfer guidelines and methodologies, to ensure effective and quality-focused replication and scaling up.

Furthermore, the following are key issues that affect sustainability and the potential for SCE replication and scale-up:

- Limitations in the Programme outcome and output definitions that were previously noted, and in the effective monitoring at both global and local levels, and the absence of a structured learning and knowledge management strategy, have reduced the ability for SCE to systematically collect evidence of success, thereby creating challenges in generating the buy-in needed for the replication and scale up of good Programme actions. Improvements generated in the last year need to be acknowledged, including greater collective learning and exchange, the systematization of testimonies, the generation of communication materials at country level, and the ongoing initiative to develop country Signature Features.

- Heavy input actions that have required SCE and partners to build technical training courses in specific trades such as tailoring and baking, are too resource heavy and ultimately trade specific to become scalable and sustainable. Key questions exist around market saturation in a given trade, particularly where no alternate courses are offered. The example of 2000 beneficiaries from refugee camps in Cameroon receiving tailoring training and start up kits, raises questions on whether such training

will continue being relevant and ultimately sustainable. For scale and sustainability there is a need to offer a wider range of technical training, constantly monitor outcomes and markets via adaptive management, and feed that knowledge back to new beneficiaries and training partners to better understand the outcome potential. This would be considered the minimum standard quality assurance requirement for this type of training. However, it is noted that the levels of input and investment required for this type of course building are not sustainable nor scalable, as also evidenced in the efficiency section.

- Implementing parties' choices that do not have guaranteed long term core funding are vulnerable to training and beneficiary support ceasing once the SCE funding is closed. Clearly this in the largest risk to sustainability and limits scalability as implementation requires constant external funding to rollout. Sub-IPs/RPs capacity to mobilize resources and/or carry out scaling up is variable; the example of the two Australia IPs/RPs carrying on raising funds on their own to continue implementing SCE without UN Women and now the Australia government looking at the model are positive, inspirational examples. SisterWorks has continued to implement SCE fully self-funded, through other private sector, philanthropic and government grants, as well as income from their social enterprise model. Real Futures has attracted some alternate funding and is in the process of fundraising to ensure sustainability and scalability.

SCE India is also leveraging partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs) and development partners to mobilize more resources into the Programme. The Programme partnered with Head Held High, a CSO, to replicate their successful model of training production centres in one of the Programme districts, through a co-financing model. Moreover, SCE India also developed partnerships with existing government programmes such as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana for vocational training of those women who aspired to learn one vocational skill and find employment in the same sector. Networking with potential training partners - private sector for on job training, as well as Corporate Social Responsibility partners (CSR) has also been an important part of the process for provisioning employment opportunities to women who aspire to have advanced skills in different sectors like aviation or hospitality.

Another positive and successful path for sustainable training that Mexico has promoted specially since 2022 is that IPs/RP's create partnerships with local governments and private sector in order to train women on specific topics based on the demand of the context. This reduces costs for the Programme by taking advantage of the local offer and also makes the training more coherent with local market demand on employment or entrepreneurship, even opening direct opportunities for the trained women. For example, in Puebla a partnership with a television cable provider enabled training for 20 SCE participants in customer support, resulting in 12 women already employed on that area (8 by the company that trained them and 4 in department stores). Other training partnerships with governments have also been successful in terms of women being employed or continuing their educational pathways.

F14. Countries have developed different partnerships and partnership strategies with diverse stakeholders, with variable results in terms of achievements, ownership and (potential) effective contribution to ensure sustainability. Though situations in every country vary, in general partnerships with the private sector have been less developed and can present yet unexplored opportunities (e.g. to connect women with inclusive business chains; access to financial support for starting businesses). Leveraging and blended financial strategies, based on strategic partnerships, need to be strengthened towards the future.

Undoubtedly, countries have worked with diverse stakeholders for different purposes and under different premises, as highlighted for example in the 2023 Annual Report. It is important to highlight, however, that building and managing strategic alliances is an "art" that requires a structured process, which includes different steps and criteria to ensure catalytic and sustainable results.

Leveraging and building synergies with existing local stakeholder to combine and complement resources, capacities and opportunities is a key principle to boost the efficiency and sustainability potential of the Programme. Some country Programmes have succeeded in working under this mindset and modality, for example making changes to partner training programmes and/or transferring training contents and methods. For example, following further in-house training, SCE programmes in Australia, Cameroon and Mexico started developing EdApp courses for use in their blended learning programmes with gradual roll-out to SCE facilitators and participants. Another example is found in India where the IP/RP PRADAN leveraged government skill development schemes for technical trainings. In general, partner choices that are designed to collaborate with larger and more financially stable organizations, such as government agencies and long-term donors (including UN agencies), have the greatest potential to be sustainable and to replicate widely. There are several country examples that achieved this, like the "Real Futures" partnership with TAFE in Australia, Cameroon with UNHCR, and potentially Mexico with CEMEX, from the private sector, as well as with the Government of Jalisco and the Municipal Government of Huixquilucan. Partnerships with other UN agencies has been more limited. However, it is important to highlight that Cameroon and Jordan are both collaborating with UNHCR. This may not be through joint programme but joint programming. There is a clear indication that in fragile/emergencies context UNHCR is the most relevant UN agencies partner. This has also been the case for the small initiative related to Afghan refugee women in Chile and Mexico. In other countries UN Women liaise with UNDP for financial literacy. UN Women, UNFPA and UNESCO had a joint programme ending in December 2021 through which UN Women leveraged the SCE model in Nepal, Tanzania and Mali. Despite the very different contexts and partnership modalities, exchange on success factors and key tips can expand possibilities and learning.

Success factors and key tips should be shared among countries, even if considering such different contexts, exchange can expand possibilities and learning.

In general terms, a guided and proactive partnership and strategy would benefit all countries. The current state of the art evidences that:

- While taking into account that most of the participants in some of the countries (not globally where they are evenly split) are not looking for a job but to start a business, it is important to note that despite some exiting alliances or links, after the participants graduate there is no guarantee that they will be hired by the companies in which they are trained. This causes a challenge for women, as they need to look for

a job in other companies. SCE's personalized support that includes access to job banks partially tackles this issue, but a more structured partnership approach to enhance employment is needed.

- Alliances with private and public actors are a great way to fulfil the Programme's objectives and improve capacities. Both governments and companies can provide various resources and support to every IP/RP, including learning content, classrooms, training, etc. It is desirable that partnerships have shared midterm objectives, clearly define the expectations in terms of concrete products and results, and are translated into operational plans that need to be regularly monitored. The technical annex for the MoU with the government of Jalisco and the Municipality of Huixquilucan in Mexico are good examples.
- Some agreements made among the IPs/RPs, civil society, and the public sector were not formalized or written. This made the agreement vulnerable to leadership and staff changes or shifts in priorities. Hence, it is recommended that all agreements between IPs/RPs, civil society, and the public sector be formalised.

4.5. BEST PRACTICES, INNOVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

EQ6. EQ6. Which where the best practices, innovations and lessons learned from the pilot phase and how did they influence Programme design and implementation since midst 2022?

F15. Countries have learned and matured during Programme implementation. Exchange and learning between countries increased during the last period, but there is still room to enhance systematic cross-fertilization, strengthened global learning and capitalization of best practices and innovations.

As the 2022 Annual Report highlights, throughout the piloting phase an expected yet key lesson learned for the SCE Programme overall has been the vital role that local solutions play for the successful adaptation of a global Programme across diverse contexts. Current effort to capture the country specific models through the creation of signature features brochures for each is a good practice to visualize specific adaptations and innovations, share, compare and potentially transfer the diverse existing country models, while also enriching the global framework.

The development of the SCE foundational courses is another example of efforts to promote a more standardized approach to SCE implementation, in this case by capturing good practices in life skills training and using them as the basis for creating a standardized curriculum and high-quality, gender-transformative blended learning courses. This will ensure the lessons learned in country over the pilot phase in terms of both content (relevant topics, engaging activities, suitable language and imagery) and methodology (offering synchronous and asynchronous engagement, ensuring content is available offline) can be shared in a very tangible way with future SCE programmes.

The evaluation team identified the lessons learned and challenges in the 6 countries of the SCE Programme in 2023:

In **Australia**, considering the specific challenges faced by women migrants, refugee, asylum seeker as well as from indigenous background to access required services and support, the IPs/RPs tested the length, timeframe and content of the SCE Programme, while offering an individually-catered approach, which establishes strong relationships with women participants. A key aspect has been the holistic approach to services offered in the learning hubs as participants loved the fact that they could go to one place and obtain assistance with employment, education, social and emotional well-being as well as cultural support.

In **Cameroon**, one of the main lessons learned relates to the high engagement of men, media and traditional leaders through sensitizations that aim to impact social behaviour and norms that are harmful for SCE participants. The engagement of SCE participants in community-based mechanisms to access community members' expertise has also been vital. In addition, provision of social protection incentives (such as childcare facilities and support) is considered fundamental to enable women's participation in skills training. SCE Cameroon has started a provision for social protection mechanisms under UNHCR.

For SCE **Chile**, having a strong monitoring system and conducting national yearly evaluations have been the most fundamental elements to gather the required evidence to adjust the intervention model and identity the best suited partners. Also, presenting the Programme in four components: e-learning methodology, employment in non-traditional sectors, leadership, and digital skills for women and girls, has given SCE the flexibility to focalize the intervention, allow each area to expand on its own, mobilize resources and scale up.

In **India,** personalized support and a community-oriented approach characterized SCE**.** On one hand, implementing partners provided need-based, handholding support, extending continuous mentoring, which has greatly helped in retaining women in education and jobs bringing down the dropout rates across the three pathways. On the other hand, community members played mentorship roles supporting and guiding the new entrants in their chosen pathways, in addition to the 276 SCE graduate mentors. This approach helped in not just increasing the enrolment across the three pathways, but also in finding and addressing the challenges and gaps which the women were facing across the pathways.

For SCE J**ordan**, the main challenge was the full integration of SCE into the Oasis model, as well as administrative delays faced in obtaining all required authorizations from the relevant Jordanian Ministries. In parallel, challenges around the need to further develop relevant courses were addressed by the development of new content based on a needs assessment with feedback from participants themselves.

In **Mexico**, the SCE team has learned that a blended approach (physical learning spaces with e-learning options) is crucial to prevent the exclusion of women facing time and transportation constraints and those lacking digital skills and equipment. The physical hubs have become safe spaces for women to learn, improve personal skills and connect with others, enhancing their empowerment. Mexico has also significantly improved its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy, although its success has required socializing it, negotiations, and support from partners and allies. Finally, Mexico consolidated a multisectoral and multi-actor strategic partnership approach to catalyse change toward results, expand the Programme's reach, and ensure its sustainability.

The continuation of the **COVID-19** pandemic and the lockdowns led to significant adaptations as the Programme pivoted towards online learning to properly reach the participants when

mobilization and gatherings were a challenge. The pandemic evidenced the importance of adaptive and solution-oriented management that timely and creatively responds to changes. Furthermore, in some cases post COVID-19 also implied challenges and re-adaptation when women re-entered the work force, limiting their available time and flexibility to participate in the Programme. To respond to this, Chile Programme adapted its delivery, allowing women to use the asynchronous modality and participate at their own pace. So, it is not only about adapting to context specificities once or twice, but to beware the dynamic context affecting the change logic to respond and preserve outcome-orientation.

> F16 Piloting, maturation and consolidation of the Programme also implied constant learning, innovating and introducing best practices to enhance the role of the global level and its contribution to the Programme, supporting and monitoring country work, developing global guidance and tools towards standardization, producing knowledge products, generating data and innovative approaches towards the future.

Throughout the Programme implementation, and even despite important challenges (i.e. changes in the coordination and other key staff), the global level has progressively gained clarity and strengthened its strategic guiding role. In doing so, it was attentive and open to capture valuable country innovations and good practices, to analyse and validate them for potential replication and standardization, while it is important to mention that not all decisions and changes at country level were necessarily coordinated or approved by the global level.

Good practices and a strengthened **monitoring and evaluation** system and approach are certainly among the key achievements. The introduction of definitions (agreed across the countries) in the logframe to ensure shared understanding of outputs and indicators, the creation of a working group, the revision of the data collection tools, the launch of the post-graduate survey and the generation of friendly dashboards with monitoring data are key achievements that strengthen Programme transparency, accountability, learning and transformational focus. Mexico and Chile were inspirational in sharing their advancements to nourish global M&E improvements.

Related to M&E, **data collection** has always been a high priority issue for the global level and implied constant efforts to enhance data quality and trustworthiness, and to increasingly generate outcome-oriented evidence, including the systematization of qualitative data on women empowerment and transformations. A recent innovative initiative to address evidence gaps related to qualitative transformative change that SCE generates in women's lives was undertaken via the implementation and systematization of FGD.

Standardization and alignment achievements and best practices include the implementation of comparable key processes like the needs assessment, and the development of global guidance and quality standards (SCE Hub Handbook, facilitator's guide, SCE e-learning brief). Progressively the Programme has gained increased clarity on its balance between the global DNA and the county tropicalizations, understanding that the Programme is "more than the sum of its parts". In terms of **financial and reporting systems**, the Programme has learned the importance of alignment to ensure that expenditures can be clearly attributed to outcomes and outputs and that comparative analysis are possible.

The increasing number of **knowledge products** has effectively target standardization issues but has also helped to further position the Programme with its uniqueness and value added.

The participatory exercise to define the Global Signature Features, guided by the global level with the participation of the countries, is a very valuable contribution towards Programme **modelling**. The subsequent initiative to have each country prepare its own signature feature brief was also very important to systematize country experiences, ensure alignment with the global framework, learn and position.

UN Women has also been exploring **new approaches to scale** and sustain the impact of the SCE, in parallel to traditional grants and direct government adoption. This is also in line with UN Women's Strategic Plan (2022-25) where the ambition to advance public-private partnerships and complement efforts to increase national-level financing with new and innovative financing approaches is clearly stated.

A feasibility study conducted in 2021 by Social Finance found that an Outcome Based Approach (OBA) is a suitable financing mechanism to pursue for SCE. With the financial support of BHP Foundation and technical advice from Social Finance, a project to develop OBA mechanisms for two pilot countries - Mexico and India - commenced in October 2022. The final deliverable from the current project is expected to be the executable design of OBA structures for the pilot two countries.

To date each country explored key technical elements of OBA design i.e. target population including location, outcomes, and verification approach. Significant work was also conducted to consider the key role(s) that UN Women can potentially play in OBA structure that leverages our expertise and credibility in women empowerment. In Mexico, a co-design process is currently underway where key aspects of the design will be discussed and eventually agreed. India has taken a different approach considering UN Women India's existing work on innovative financing and with private sector.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1: The Programme is fully aligned with international human rights commitments and is **highly relevant** to address the education and employment disadvantages of the most marginalized women, aggravated due to COVID-19. Its unique adaptive nature has enabled tailored learning and earning pathways and flexible delivery modes for diverse populations and contexts under a global Programme and Theory of Change. Evidence-based though flexible implementation strategies reached diverse populations but not always the most marginalized. Decision to focus on most marginalized women, excluding young women in the definition of the beneficiaries, and revising priority countries based on their achievements, needs and potentialities (e.g. Australia), is endorsed by the evaluation team.	
Related findings: 1, 2, 3, 5	**Linked to recommendation(s): 1, 2**
Conclusion 2: While the **Theory of Change** has guided Programme implementation and framed monitoring, it was not used as a tool to systematically revise the context, ensure outcome-focused adaptations and strategic decision-making. The evaluation has evidenced that there is a need to revise the existing Theory of Change to strengthen its alignment with experience-based learning, enhance its gender-transformative potential and improve its technical consistency to increase its utility as an adaptive management tool. Furthermore, the identification of global and country level SCE Signature Features is an opportunity to revise the global ToC and country adaptations, to ensure alignment and consistency.	
Related findings: 2, 4, 6, 7	Linked to recommendation(s): 2

Conclusion 3: After the MTR recommendations, increased attention was paid to **standardization, institutionalization and cross-fertilization**, as key aspects to ensure global coherence, comparable quality, enhanced Programme performance and higher replication and scaling potential. Different knowledge products were developed and learning exchanges were promoted. However, there is still need for additional global guidelines and frameworks (e.g. for strategic alliances) and for a structured, systematic learning and knowledge management strategy.

| Related findings: 5, 6, 15, 16 | Linked to recommendation(s): 2, 4 |

Conclusion 4: Monitoring and data collection processes, as well as data quality, have improved in the course of the Programme implementation, but this is still an ongoing process. While newly implemented dashboards with the outcome and output results are very useful, it is important to note that global summative data, particularly overachievements, can be misleading and hide large country disparities. It is also crucial to further integrate useful data analysis with Programme management at country and global level. Also, the ToC based outcome and output indicators do not embrace broader gender changes. The launch of the post graduate survey is a milestone towards greater outcome focus and capacity to evidence Programme-related transformations, including Outcome 2.

| Related findings: 6,7, 8. 9, 10 | Linked to recommendation(s): 2 |

Conclusion 5: The **level of achievement** presents significant country variations, which is particularly relevant since targets are tailored for each country reality. Australia and Cameroon have not achieved significant progress in 7 indicators, while Jordan has not achieved progress in 1 indicator, Chile has made significant progress on all indicators, and Mexico and India on most indicators. In relation to Outcome 1, the established global target was roughly achieved in year 5, and by June 2023 enrolled learners represented 98% of the defined target. COVID-19 also had a variable impact on country performance. Design problems in terms of defining realistic targets, particularly in some countries and in relation to some indicators, is also highlighted.

| Related findings: 7, 8, 9, 10 | Linked to recommendation(s): 1, 3 |

Conclusion 6: While experience has validated the importance of **social and cultural enabling environments** for women to participate in the Programme and achieve education and/or employment transformations, the definition of Outcome 3 seems quite ambitious and the related outputs and indicators are not very strong. This has not contributed to greater clarity and a shared understanding about the role, implications and strategies for the Programme in relation to transforming gender norms and harmful practices, and – for example- effectiveness of online training to achieve expected changes. Leveraging partnerships has contributed in some countries to address factors that inhibit or difficult women enrolment in the Programme. This Outcome also opens the discussion – based on already existing experience- on whether the Programme should also promote positive masculinities to support gender transformative change.

| Related findings: 10 | Linked to recommendation(s): 1 |

Conclusion 7: Creating **enabling policy and legal conditions** is a fundamental component of the Programme, its transformative potential, and is a condition towards sustainability and scalability. All countries report achievements in 2022 with the exception of Jordan. Interesting to note that only Chile and India reported achievements in relation to the following indicator: "Number of countries that have, with UN-Women's support, revised budget frameworks in favour of marginalized young women's access to second chance vocational training.". This indicator could not be found in the latest logframe; while the challenge of influencing budget allocation is clear, removing the indicator is considered a setback given the importance of budget allocation to really install any changes and ensure implementation.

Related findings: 10	Linked to recommendation(s): 1, 4
Conclusion 8: Overachievements in Outcome 1 and to a lesser extent in Outcome 2, have also implied overspending in the corresponding budgets. Budget execution in relation to Outcomes 3 and 4 is characterized by a notable variability, particularly in the case of Outcome 3, with execution percentages that range from 1% to 93%. A simple calculation of the unit cost per learner evidenced enormous differences that alert about the need to further take into consideration **value for money** criteria and enhance efficiency in the locations with higher costs, as in the case Australia. Increased focus on leveraging partnerships and exiting resources would impact positively on efficiency. Furthermore, ensuring alignment of financial reporting systems to outcomes and outputs is important.	
Related findings: 11	Linked to recommendation(s): 3
Conclusion 9: Conditions for **sustainability** in terms of continuity of processes and results, replication and scaling up are on the way but not fully in place yet. While in general the SCE Programme model was validated and is highly relevant, there are important aspects for further improvement, including potential changes in the role of the Programme vis-a-vis increased strategic focus on leveraging local strategic partners. Furthermore, countries are in the process of articulating their "models" in ways they can be shared (e.g. the country Signature Features). Transfer methodologies or guidelines are important to lower risks and facilitate responsible ownership, adoption and/or adaptation. Positive sustainability pillars are in place to build upon in a Phase II.	
Related findings: 12, 13, 14	Linked to recommendation(s): 1, 2, 4
Conclusion 10: The Programme is a relevant, unique and effective model to tackle marginalized women educational and employment needs from a global though country-sensitive perspective. A Phase II is highly recommended and should be integrated into the strategic planning of UN Women. The pilot phase enabled the Programme to learn and strengthen its initial global approach, while investing in the development of six country-specific responses and potential models. Dedication and high-quality performance of the Programme staff were key for success. Experience and learning need to be further systematized – at global and country level- to inform future decisions and nourish the revision of the ToC and strategic framework, to increase replicability and scalability potential at all levels. Based on the evaluation, two key issues require particular attention towards the future: effective transformation of women's lives and maximized value for money.	
Related findings: All	Linked to recommendation(s): All

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION
This evaluation has found that the SCE Programme is a robust model for improving the wellbeing and economic empowerment of the most marginalized women. On this basis, the design, financing and implementation of Phase II is highly recommended.

The following eight key, strategic recommendations that are unpacked in several priority areas and measures, should guide the implementation of the General Recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 1.
Based on Phase I experiences and future projections, UN Women should update the Programme Theory of Change for Phase II.

Based on Findings: 1, 2, 4, 9, 13	The update could consider:
Priority: High **Timeframe:** Starting first trimester 2024 until December 2024 (based on specific workplan).	• Develop explicit country-level adaptations of the global ToC. • Align the Programme ToC with the global and country-level Signature Features and local ToCs. • Reflect all additional and complementary validated strategies to strengthen the relevance and transformational approach, including women's empowerment and agency, and positive masculinities. • Review the conceptual consistency and validity of the assumptions. • Analyse the viability of the ToC in specific contexts to guide country selection for Phase II.

To be led by: SCE global team in coordination with Phase I country teams.

Impact: Based on evidence and previous experience, the updated ToC will boost the transformational potential of the SCE Programme in the design and implementation of Phase II, and will provide UN Women greater clarity on needed enabling conditions for future country selection.

Difficulty: Medium

If not implemented: The Programme will not have a solid experience-based framework to ensure coherence and consistency; strategic decision-making will not be guided by evidence and learning from pilot Phase I, and the transformational potential of the Programme will not be boosted to its full potential in Phase II.

RECOMMENDATION 2.
UN Women should strengthen the focus of the Programme on marginalized groups with an intersectional approach.

Based on Findings: 2, 3, 6, 8, 9 **Priority: High**	Strengthening could consider:
Timeframe: First semester 2024	• Based on global guidelines and criteria, revise and simplify the country beneficiary profiles and their consistency. • Develop guidelines to operationalize an intersectional approach in the definition, selection and targeting of most marginalized groups. • Validate the capacity of the Programme to ensure targeting these specific population groups and reporting consequently. • Develop linkages with regional programmes and commitments.

To be led by: SCE global team, with engagement of senior management (particularly the humanitarian chief), in coordination with Phase I country teams.

Impact: A clearer and more coherent and consistent LNOB focus, targeting and impacting significantly on the lives of the more marginalized women.

Difficulty: Medium

If not implemented: The capacity of UN Women to effectively target and demonstrate impact on most marginalized women's empowerment and lives will be diminished.

RECOMMENDATION 3.

UN Women should integrate a fully expanded socio-ecological approach into the Theory of Change and M&E system.

Based on Findings: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14 **Priority: Medium** **Timeframe:** First semester 2024, connected to Recommendation 1.	**The approach could consider:** • Identify key changes and enabling conditions at different levels (individual, couples, family, community, society) and their interrelations. • Based on a partnerships' strategy, identify key stakeholders and partners that can contribute to generate changes and enabling conditions outside the direct scope of the Programme. • Develop a joint monitoring and learning framework with key stakeholders and partners.

To be led by: SCE global and country teams

Impact: Enhance the transformative, outreach, financing and sustainability potential of the Programme in Phase II. Leverage resources and capacities from other stakeholders at global, regional and country level, to expand and complement efforts.

Difficulty: High

If not implemented: The outreach and impact of the Programme in Phase II can be limited and the sustainability threatened.

RECOMMENDATION 4.

UN Women should continue strengthening the strategic roles and contribution of the global level.

Based on Findings: 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 **Priority: High** **Timeframe:** Throughout 2024	**Strengthening could consider:** • For Phase II, review current outcomes and outputs, paying particular attention to changes needed in social norms and harmful practices. • Define realistic though significant global and country targets. • Integrate impact measurement to strengthen evidence and accountability related to transformative changes in women's lives related to their participation in the SCE Programme (e.g. enhanced attention and care of their health and wellbeing, more equitable distribution of care work in the households, greater recognition by their partners). • Continue generating guidelines to standardize key aspects and ensure minimum standards.

- Based on existing knowledge products and previous experience, develop a forward-looking KM strategy, that focuses on harmonizing and institutionalizing documentation, systematization and learning.
- Despite acknowledged limitations in existing institutional systems, ToC should be used to guide periodic monitoring and adaptive management.

To be led by: UN Women at global level.

Impact: Capacity to lead the implementation of the evaluation recommendations towards Phase II and continue strengthening the consistency of the Programme and the country-level implementation.

Difficulty: High

If not implemented: Difficulties in implementing the recommendations and capitalizing Phase I learning and good practices towards a strengthened Phase II design and implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 5.
UN Women should integrate a value for money approach in Programme decision-making, management and M&E.

Based on Findings: 8, 11, 12 **Priority: High** **Timeframe:** First semester 2024	**The approach could consider:** • Develop or adapt a value for money framework for the Programme. • Integrate value for money analysis in M&E. • Clearly define value for money ranges combined with LNOB criteria, to select new countries. • Review the data and strategies of high-cost Phase I countries. • Develop creative alternatives to increase efficiency and value for money.

To be led by: SCE global team

Impact: More attractive for donors to invest and for stakeholders to partner with the Programme. It is an important criteria to guide efficiency-related Programme decisions.

Difficulty: High

If not implemented: Less prepared to attract new funding and strong partnerships. Can lead to inefficient decisions for example in country selection.

RECOMMENDATION 6.
UN Women should leverage capacities and resources from other stakeholders to move to a more efficient and sustainable model.

Based on Findings: 11, 12, 13, 14 **Priority: High**	**Suggestions in this regard include:** • Analyse the possibility of moving towards a more efficient (and also more sustainable) "light-touch/leverage model", consolidating the role of local, qualified partners as

Timeframe: Throughout 2024	implementers based on best practices and lessons learned so far.
	• Systematically map and analyse existing institutions and initiatives that could be leveraged.
	• Learn from previous leveraging initiatives and good practices.
	• Analyse the impact on efficiency & value for money of leveraging partnerships.

To be led by: SCE global team in coordination with country teams

Impact: Expanded outreach, lower costs, increased focus on specialization and value added, and higher sustainability potential.

Difficulty: Medium

If not implemented: The Programme will not benefit from existing capacities and resources, implementing a less efficient and less sustainable model.

RECOMMENDATION 7.
UN Women needs to enhance the sustainability potential of the Programme.

Based on Findings: 5, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14 **Priority: High** **Timeframe:** First semester 2024.	**Suggestions in this regard include:** • Develop a sustainability strategy for Phase II to address: i) continuity; ii) replication; iii) scaling up. • Support countries in the current development of their sustainability plans. • Develop structured transfer guidelines and methodologies for replication and scaling up process • Develop blended financial models for Phase II and innovative resource mobilization strategies. • Analyse the impact on efficiency & value for money of leveraging partnerships.

To be led by: SCE global team with engagement of senior management and in coordination with country teams.

Impact: Solid sustainability strategies in place, making the Programme more attractive for new investments; and increasing the continuity, replicability and scaling potential.

Difficulty: Medium

If not implemented: Fragile sustainability measures and insufficient capacity to develop and take advantage of alternative funding models and opportunities. Limited outreach of replication and scaling up initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 8.
UN Women should strengthen the positioning of the Programme and its capacity to attract traditional and new partners.

Based on Findings: 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14	**Strengthening could consider:** • Strengthen the storytelling of the Programme, share showcase success stories and data.

Priority: **Medium** **Timeframe:** Second and third quarter 2024.	• Convene actors and sectors globally and regionally to further position the Programme and its value added, discuss key political and strategic issues that influence women's economic empowerment, and establish joint commitments and a shared agenda. • Identify and approach new global, regional and country-level strategic partners (private sector, UN agencies).

To be led by: SCE global team with the support of UN Women global communication team and in coordination with the country teams

Impact: More key stakeholders and potential partners know about the Programme and are interested in coordinating and supporting. Existing capacities and resources can be leveraged to strengthen and expand the Programme.

Difficulty: Low

If not implemented: Less visible and attractive for potential new key strategic partners.

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