EVALUATION BRIEF

January 2014

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN PEACE AND SECURITY
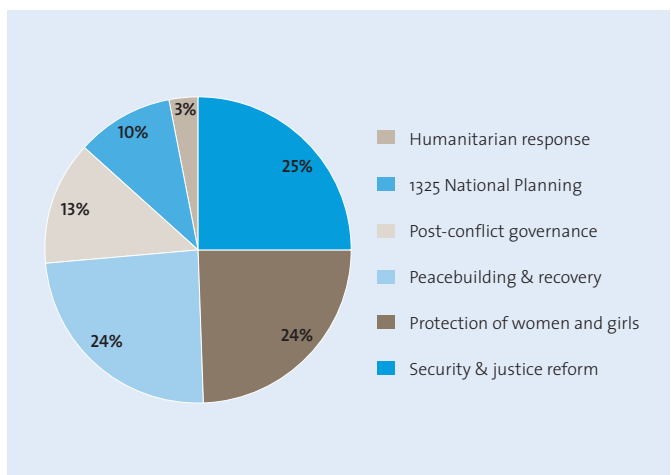
UN WOMEN

Context

UN Security Council resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122) call for the urgent need to address women's participation in peace processes and peacebuilding as well as the need to protect them from violations of their rights during and after conflicts.

UN Women supports the implementation of these resolutions and prioritizes the area of increasing women's leadership in peace and security and humanitarian response in its Strategic Plan specifically under Goal 4. With the creation of UN Women in 2011 came the creation of a separate thematic policy section on peace and security to provide intellectual leadership on this issue that works hand in hand with the programmatic division in charge of the implementation at the field level.

From 2012 to 2013, the UN Women Evaluation Office undertook the thematic evaluation of UN Women contribution to increasing women's leadership and participation in peace and security and humanitarian response. The thematic evaluation assessed what was the contribution of UN Women and its predecessor entities in this area. The objectives of the evaluation were to capture key results and lessons learned that would inform the future programmatic planning of UN Women in women, peace and security.

The evaluation covered the period 2008-2012, and included the work of UN Women and its predecessor entities. The evaluation examined the different types of activities UN Women and its predecessor entities conducted during the period under evaluation to deliver their strategic objectives on peace and security and humanitarian response. The evaluation included five country case studies and one case study at the headquarters level.

UN Women Peace and Security Portfolio by theme

- Humanitarian response — 25%
- 1325 National Planning — 24%
- Post-conflict governance — 24%
- Peacebuilding & recovery — 13%
- Protection of women and girls — 10%
- Security & justice reform — 3%

Access the full report at http://gate.unwomen.org

What has UN Women achieved?

The evaluation found that UN Women achieved the following:

- UN Women contributed to shaping global policy and norms that advance women's leadership and participation in peace and security;
- UN Women is seen as a lead actor within the UN system on women, peace and security at a global level;
- UN Women successfully contributed to changes in laws and policies of Member States that advance women's leadership and participation in peace and security;
- UN Women contributed to increasing access to mechanisms or institutions enabling women to participate in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction; the facilitation of access to political, legislative, policy and planning processes for women and women's organisations; support to improve women's access to basic services in conflict-affected contexts, including justice and security; increasing the number of women leaders, civil servants and service providers; and including women's voice in transitional-justice processes;
- UN Women provided overall strategic coherence on women's leadership and participation in peace and security at global and country level with objectives of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 clearly reflected in UN Women's strategic plan priority Goal 4;

- UN Women produced rich and authoritative knowledge on women, peace and security at the global level; and
- UN Women demonstrated an improved ability to forge strategic relationships with key stakeholders, particularly within the UN system to lead inter-agency coordination at the global level.

How can UN Women improve?

The evaluation identified the following areas for improvement for UN Women to consolidate and enhance its contribution to women, peace and security:

- UN Women needs to strengthen its monitoring and evaluation systems to better demonstrate results in the area of women, peace and security and use evidence for decision-making;
- UN Women should improve its strategic planning and make use of the theory of change approach to strengthen its programmes in this area;
- UN Women is seen as a leader in knowledge production on women, peace and security but must improve its capacity to share lessons learned efficiently, and to disseminate these more widely;
- UN Women should work to attract sufficient financial and human resources for peace and security to meet the expectations generated with the creation of UN Women, particularly at country level.

What have we learned? Good practices from country case studies

Liberia: Harnessing local institutions and understanding to build peace

As part of a global programme 'From Communities to Global Security Organisations', UN Women and its partners in Liberia support an innovative initiative that builds on existing local institutions to increase women's participation in conflict mediation and resolution. 'Peace Huts' are safe community spaces where women can come together to discuss matters that affect their daily lives and resolve community conflicts or disputes, particularly those related to sexual- and gender-based violence.

Innovative aspects of the programme include:

- Building on pre-existing local institutions and understandings. The Peace Huts are based on the traditional 'Palava hut' system in Liberia, where local leaders heard community cases and resolved disputes.
- A process-driven approach. The Peace Huts invest in facilitating and supporting local women's groups and communities to come together to discuss and address issues of women's peace and security.
- Linking peacebuilding and economic empowerment activities. Initially, the Peace Huts focused on women's participation in peacebuilding. Since 2012, however, they have also supported economic opportunities for women to link peacebuilding and economic empowerment, creating an added incentive for women to participate.

Recommendations to move forward

The evaluation makes five strategic recommendations to UN Women aimed at strengthening its work in this thematic area:

- **RECOMMENDATION 1:** Continue to scale up proactive intergovernmental engagement and interagency coordination through a twin-track approach: (i) to pursue women, peace and security implementation proactively and (ii) to incentivize buy-in from key stakeholders, including selected Member States and key UN agencies.

- **RECOMMENDATION 2:** UN Women should strengthen programming capabilities to remain flexible and adaptive, while improving strategic planning, strategic prioritization of interventions and catalytic engagement in women, peace and security programming.

- **RECOMMENDATION 3:** UN Women should better document implicit theories of change that often feature in practice in much of its work at headquarters and country office level.

- **RECOMMENDATION 4:** UN Women should invest in organizational capacities and financial and human resources specifically on women, peace and security.

- **RECOMMENDATION 5:** Introduce and support more systematic risk assessments to be embedded in planning and monitoring and evaluation at country level.

What have we learned? Good practices from country case studies

Colombia: 'Accompanying' women's organisations and facilitating sub-national dialogue

The UN Women Verdad, Justicia y Reparación (Truth, Justice and Reparation) programme supports women victims of armed conflict in Colombia in three ways. First, it helps to build trust between parties on opposite sides of the conflict; second the presence of UN Women and its support to grassroots women's CSOs contributes to the creation of a safer environment for them in their advocacy activities; third, UN Women has helped to facilitate space for the voice of women's movements to have an impact on policy.

The process dimension of the programme has been important for the programme's reach and effectiveness and its perceived values, including:

- Fostering strategic partnerships with a network of women's organisations, including at grassroots level extending coverage outside Bogotá;
- 'Accompaniment' of women's movements giving visibility to their agenda and helping them to gain access to policy processes; and
- Brokering relationships and dialogue between different stakeholders, including women's organisations at national and subregional level, and between women's organisations and government/public officials.

UN Women's transitional justice programme in Colombia shows how the process elements of normative and operational work is as important to the advancement of women, peace and security objectives as substantive content. The challenge for UN Women is to find ways to better capture, assess and communicate this important element of its work.

What have we learned? Good practices from country case studies

Haiti: Women and humanitarian response

UN Women's role in Haiti is mainly to work with other agencies to ensure that women's concerns are mainstreamed across their humanitarian activities, rather than as a first responder in emergency situations. Two key lessons emerged from the Haiti case study:

- The need to integrate a gender perspective in specific humanitarian response tasks. UN Women supported local civil society organisations to re-organise the delivery of food, as initial assessments showed that women were being assaulted after receiving food. UN Women then supported street vendors to supply food to vulnerable families, ensuring the regeneration of women's livelihoods opportunities while, at the same time, addressing the basic needs of the most vulnerable and ensuring protection against violence during large-scale food distributions. Civil society organisations partners acknowledged this project as an innovative approach that worked well in the local context and that could provide a future model for UN Women's engagement in humanitarian response.
- The need to create synergies between humanitarian response and on-going projects and adapt them to the needs of local communities experiencing humanitarian crisis. Through the Safer Cities Programme, UN Women engaged with international and national partners in the management of camps for internally displaced persons to ensure adherence to basic principles on the safety of public spaces from women's perspectives. This included, for example, locating women's toilets close to their living quarters and installing sufficient lighting.

UN Women is the UN entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

The UN Women Evaluation Office main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making and contribute to learning on the best ways to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality through normative, operational and coordination work. UN Women Evaluation Office also strengthens capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments and civil society organizations.

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