

EVALUATION SUMMARY

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA
SUB REGION

THEMATIC EVALUATION OF
UN WOMEN ACTION TO END
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



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**EVALUATION REPORT PREPARED BY:
SARAH MAGUIRE WITH CLAUDIA LO
FORTE & GEORGIA TAYLOR**

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PROJECT SUMMARY

Countries: Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia and South Sudan

Thematic area: Violence Against Women (VAW)

Implementing Partners: Government Institutions, UN System, International and National NGOs, Academic institutions, Media, Women Organizations

Duration of Project: January 2008 – December 2011

Budget: US\$ 18,457,500: The program was supported by Swedish Development Agency (SIDA) with a 4-year \$5 million grant and funding from other funders; Governments of Norway, Spain, Italy, UUSC, FEM- US National Committee, Swiss National Committee and CHF contributing to the \$18million budget.

I. Background

UN Women's East and Horn of Africa sub-regional office (EHARO) commissioned Social Development Direct (SDD) to conduct this Thematic Evaluation of UN Women's Strategy to End Violence against Women in the East and Horn of Africa.

In order to ensure that the thematic evaluation was relevant and useful to UN Women's country offices and its partners in the sub-region, the bulk of the work consisted of field-based country studies. The ensuing Country Notes were prepared mostly as a result of field visits supported by literature and desk-based interviews. The intended methodology for each country study was to interview UN staff and key partners in government, UN Country Team and civil society and to conduct validation workshops towards the end of the study. Where possible, the team was expected to go outside the capital.

II. Program Purpose and Goals

VAWG constitutes one of UN Women's six strategic areas of focus. It is a key subject of the Organization's long-term strategy and is an area to which member states – including donors - are increasingly

committed. Globally, there is a dawning realization that, not only is VAWG perhaps the most prevalent human rights violation but it comprises a major obstacle to peace, stability and development across the sub-region. UN Women has a strong track record and credibility across the East and Horn of Africa. The timing is therefore right to address VAWG in a serious, strategic and dynamic way.

III. Evaluation Objectives and Scope

Evaluation Purpose:

The objectives of the evaluation were:

- 1) To analyze the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UN Women action to end violence against women (VAW) from both a sub-regional perspective and at country level.
- 2) To identify strengths, weaknesses, challenges and current trends in UN Women initiatives that have implications for strengthening its future managerial, programmatic and funding directions.
- 3) To provide forward-looking recommendations and a potential Theory of Change to strengthen programming in the area of VAW in the sub-region.

This evaluation is deliberately more formative than retro-spective. This reflects the reality of UN Women programming to address violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the sub-region as well as the opportunities UN Women now faces in terms of its changed mandate and structure. The report contains a suggested theory of change and a 15-point plan for the development of a strategy and work plan for UN Women across the sub-region.

Note: There are Country Notes for each country study. These make more detailed recommendations for interventions by UN Women and partners at national level.

Data, Sources, Collection and Analysis Methods:

This thematic evaluation was conducted between October 2011 and March 2012. It consisted of country studies in Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania Uganda and remote studies for Somalia and South Sudan, complemented by extensive literature reviews. Preliminary findings were presented to UN Women and, in some cases, to partners from government, civil society and the UN Country Team.

Evaluation Methodology:

This evaluation aimed to adopt a human rights-based approach, in that it (a) deliberately addressed women's and girls' rights to be free from gender-based violence and its consequences; (b) adopted human rights principles including universality, indivisibility and accountability and (c) built the capacity of national stakeholders.

The ToR envisaged that EHARO would set up (i) a Reference Group consisting of the heads of the country offices and others and (ii) an Advisory Group including donors. These groups were to provide guidance and support during the whole evaluation process from inception to final draft and presentation. The Reference Group was also to ensure commitment to the issues from all the EHARO country offices. Unfortunately, the sub-regional office was not able to set up these structures.

IV. Findings

1. VAWG is highly prevalent across the sub-region. It takes many forms depending on the context, including domestic violence (often exacerbated by 'bride price'), female genital mutilation, forced marriage of girls and women, other sexual violence against girls, violence against widows, targeting of displaced women and conflict-related sexual violence.

i. Institutional issues

2. VAWG is one of UN Women's six strategic areas of focus and the subject of the strategy "A Life Free of Violence: Unleashing the Power of Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2013". The UN Secretary General's UNiTE and Africa UNiTE campaigns have also laid a foundation for work with national governments, particularly around awareness-raising.

3. UN Women has not, however, had a coherent, concerted or explicit program on VAWG at either sub-regional or country level, although some country offices have carried out activities regarding VAWG or that are likely to have an impact on VAWG.

4. National governments, supported by UN Women and others, have engaged in regional and sub-regional initiatives such as the International

Conference on the Great Lakes Region, National Action Plans on women, peace and security and the African Union commitments to tackle VAWG. Absent a sub-regional strategy on VAWG, however, UN Women's country offices have not had a forum to pull together their work to support national governments or to share information and learn from each other.

5. The change of mandate from UNIFEM to UN Women is much more than a name change. It gives UN Women the opportunity and the responsibility to support national governments to exercise 'due diligence' regarding their obligations under international and regional law, while maintaining close links with civil society. The mandate also gives UN Women a clear position within the UN family to provide expert advice and technical support.

6. Currently, however, UN Women has limited VAWG expertise in its country offices or at the sub-regional level. Staff members are sharp, fine people but they lack the time or space to become experts on VAWG. Nor is there adequate support or coordination from headquarters for UN Women to credibly position itself as the lead entity on VAWG.

ii. Relevance

7. Generally, UN Women's country programs are context-driven and based on local realities. They are well-aligned with national priorities as expressed by governments and civil society. The relevance of country office programs is constrained, however, by not having a strategy or specific program focus on VAWG.

8. Capacity issues have sometimes meant that UN Women's coverage has been limited to supporting urban, vocal women's civil society organizations (CSOs). In particular, staff capacity has restricted the extent to which it can reach out to CSOs representing marginalized women and girls. Hence, the issues facing women who are very poor, displaced or otherwise marginalized have sometimes fallen by the wayside.

9. UN Women's mandate gives it the locus and should give it the influence it needs to engage with others in UN Country Teams (UNCTs) to ensure that issues of gender equality and women's

empowerment are integrated throughout UN programming.

iii. Effectiveness

10. UN Women has tended to be most effective in countries where the UN operates a Joint Program on Gender Equality or where the UN is 'Delivering as One'. In these cases, resources are managed well, efficiently and effectively. UN Women performs its coordination function well. Where this is not the case, there tends to be no lead on VAWG and therefore less response by the UNCT.

11. Effectiveness has been constrained by a lack of staff capacity, a strategy to address VAWG and institutional issues. Despite this, some country offices have engaged in catalytic, strategic interventions. Examples include the work on post-election violence in Kenya, commissioning prevalence research in South Sudan and working with national governments to prepare for the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

12. UN Women is taking a long time to transition administratively from UNIFEM. This has had negative effects on staff recruitment and retention, ability to pay partners on time and the issue of delegated authority. When these issues are resolved, UN Women will be able to assert itself as a major player in the UN family at country level.

13. The UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women has had limited impact in the sub-region.

iv. Efficiency

14. UN Women has operated with limited resources (financial and human). At country level, it has largely operated as a donor to CSOs, leaving little time to engage more strategically.

15. Almost every country in the sub-region is affected by humanitarian crises, in which VAWG is often particularly acute. To date, UN Women has had no presence in this arena yet is considering positioning itself as the generic, gender lead for humanitarian response. UN Women should be careful that this does not divert much-needed resources away from VAWG to the area of humanitarian programming - where others may be better placed to take a lead.

16. Improved coordination across country offices, between regions and with headquarter-based

activity would lead to improved efficiency in the use of resources.

v. Sustainability

16. UN Women has demonstrated that engagement with national governments - either directly, through key CSOs or UN partners - to bring about policy, legislative and strategic change is the most sustainable.

17. UN Women's work has made some significant gains, whether as a result of country level interventions or those at the global level. The challenge is to make these gains sustainable at national and local levels. High profile events can be useful to raise awareness and keep VAWG on the national agenda. Their usefulness is in the way they are communicated and linking these events with strategic points such as the launch of national action plans or changes in legislation.

V. Conclusions & Recommendations

Recommendations at sub-regional level:

1. Make the decision to recognize VAWG as a major and endemic human rights violation and a threat to the peace and development of the sub-region and affirm this at the level of the country offices
2. Decide to focus on justice (informal as well as formal) and the rule of law as the catalytic area for change on VAWG
3. Re-examine the strategy: "A Life Free of Violence: Un-leashing the Power of Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2013" using its four pillars and six strategies as a starting position and identify the resources needed to put this into action. Include VAWG expertise and support from HQ as resources.
4. Identify up to three bodies from outside UN Women to be champions and advocates for this strategy (e.g. regional or sub-regional organizations; international women's rights organizations).
5. Focus on building relationships with regional and sub-regional bodies both where work on VAWG exists (e.g. AU, ICGLR) and where there is untapped potential (e.g. IGAD).

At the country level:

6. Using UN Women mandate as the filter, identify past and current interventions, activities or programs that have had an impact on VAWG or could have had an impact on VAWG and assess whether they remain (a) relevant; (b) fit with the new mandate and (c) are consistent with a focus on justice and the rule of law.

7. Identify the measures that national governments should put in place to comply with its due diligence obligation under international and regional human rights law.

8. Identify entry points for UN Women to take the lead or coordination role within the UN Country team.

9. Identify no more than 5 key ministries for partnership. These are likely to be the gender machinery, and the ministries of justice, finance, interior and information.

10. Identify no more than five civil society organizations or networks with whom to form special partnerships. At least one of them should be active at each of the three levels of the theory of change (i.e. at least one addresses causes, at least one addresses prevention, at least one addresses impact of VAWG).

11. Identify no more than five other bodies that will be catalytic in effecting change. These may be government officials, donors or regional bodies (e.g. Women Judges (Tanzania); DFID (Uganda); GBV sub-cluster (South Sudan); Human Rights Commission (Ethiopia); Police (Kenya); Women's Shelter (Sudan); One-stop center (Somalia)).

12. Draw up an advocacy strategy; what needs to be said, to whom and by whom?

13. Build in a robust and imaginative monitoring and evaluation framework using direct, proxy and proximate /indirect indicators.

14. Identify what other programmatic interventions (e.g. peace and security, governance, economic empowerment) can complement or provide synergy with the VAWG program.

Other key recommendations

UN Women

1. **Headquarters:** Ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate human resources within each country office and the sub-regional office, with dedicated expertise on VAWG. Generic 'gender' expertise is insufficient. Consider secondments from national or international partners.

2. **Headquarters / Sub-regional office:** Standardise the Trust Fund application format so that CSOs are clearer about the criteria and whether they are likely to be successful

3. **Headquarters / Sub-regional office:** Institutionalise information flows between country offices, sub-regional office and headquarters

4. **Sub-regional office:** Ensure that VAWG is prominent on the agenda of sub-regional and regional initiatives, based on information from country offices

5. Review all support to CSOs; make sure it is sustainable and demonstrates value for money.

To UN Resident Coordinators / UN Country Team members

1. Hold discussions with donors to leverage support for work on VAWG

2. Ensure that VAWG features prominently in the work of all UN Country Team members vis-à-vis their counterpart national ministries, using the UN Africa UniTE campaign as a collective platform for action

To national governments

1. Finish drafting and passing laws relating to VAWG without further, unnecessary delay

2. Ratify outstanding international and regional law for the protection of women and girls from violence

3. Reform or repeal laws and policies that discriminate, perpetuate or permit discrimination against women and girls

4. Remove institutional obstacles to the implementation of positive laws and policies regarding VAWG

5. Ensure adequate budgetary allocation for work to combat VAWG and build expertise to do so.

To the regional / sub-regional organisations

1. Include VAWG in declarations, statements and commitments regarding development and

regarding specific groups affected by VAWG, particularly women, youth and children

2. Prioritize VAWG in plans for nominated decades and initiatives and ensure that this addresses VAWG in times of stability as well as in situations of crisis

To donors

1. Hold country-level or sub-regional discussions with UN Women on how donors can support work on VAWG. For example, consider the possibilities of transitioning financial support to national civil society organisations away from UN Women. Consider support to national governments to build capacity in addressing VAWG.

2. Where necessary, increase own capacity with expertise on VAWG; where available, consider seconding expertise to UN Women

3. Use diplomatic / political position with national governments to advocate for (a) reform/ repeal of discriminatory laws; (b) passing into law of legislation that protects women and girls from violence and (c) central government funding for VAWG work.

For further details of key findings under each area, please see the full mid-term evaluation report, available at:

<http://gate.unwomen.org/unifem/evaluation-admin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=4553>

