



Final Evaluation of the Knowledge Gateway on Women's Economic Empowerment Project (Empower Women) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

Background and Purpose of the Evaluation

This report is the final evaluation of the UN Women's "Knowledge Gateway on Women's Economic Empowerment" (KG) project or "Empower Women" (EW) as it has become known since 2015. It covers the period from 28 March 2012 to 30 September 2016, which represents the first phase of the EW project. The objectives of the evaluation are to provide an overall narrative of the project's achievements beyond the initial programme document, and assessing the results achieved against the stated project objectives, outcomes, and outputs. In addition, the evaluation highlights conclusions and key lessons learned and provides recommendations for the second phase of EW.

The main audience of this evaluation is the management and project staff of UN Women (UNW), as well as a number of selected partner organizations, including the Government of Canada as the main donor. The evaluation findings will be used for: (1) donor reporting to the Government of Canada; (2) strategic decision-making, organizational learning, and knowledge management of the lessons learned, best practices established, and innovations delivered; and (3) information for the next project phase (2016-2021) as UNW explores new sources of funding and new partnerships for the coming years.

Programme Description and Context

The KG was launched in collaboration with the Government of Canada in September 2013. The platform was designed to be a comprehensive and interactive one-stop shop for learning, knowledge sharing, and networking on women's economic empowerment (WEE). In doing so, it filled a gap in the online offer regarding this topic. The former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), now Global Affairs Canada, supported the initiative with a grant worth CAD 5,100,600.00 (USD 5,103,658.50¹). Additionally, the project received USD 78,500 in donations from three partner organizations² for specific project activities. An important contribution was also made by PwC, providing pro bono support worth USD 3.5 million for the redesign and relaunch of the platform during 2015-2016.

The project targets three main beneficiary groups that include duty bearers and rights holders:

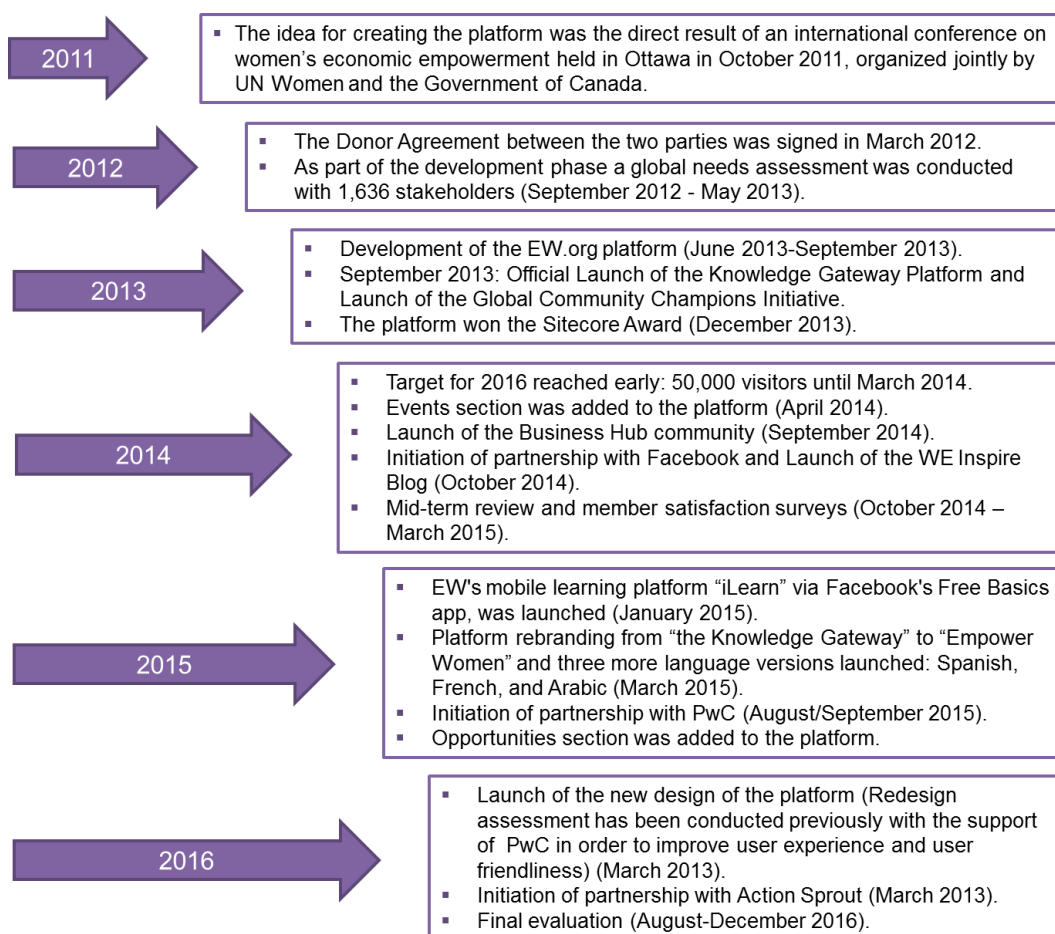
1. Ultimate beneficiaries: women entrepreneurs, workers, and farmers.
2. Intermediaries who can help reach these ultimate beneficiaries, both through raising awareness of EW and through implementing the knowledge that they have acquired via the platform on how to target people from this group (for example: entrepreneurship and business networks, labour unions, professional associations, NGOs, training institutes, impact investors, private sector corporations, as well as interested individuals (women and men) from all sectors that can act as change agents).
3. The wider support system, in order to create an enabling environment through gender-responsive laws and policies, which would ultimately benefit people from the first group (for example: International organizations, UN, governments, parliaments, policymakers, researchers, teachers, students, and donors).

Over the past four years, the project has been marked by a number of key developments that are summarized in the below graphic. Most of these had not been foreseen in the initial project design, but were a result of an innovative design-thinking approach and based on constant consultations with users and other stakeholders, which aimed to deliver continuous improvement by testing new approaches and adapting to the needs of both the users and partners.

¹ This was the equivalent at the project start. The budget valued as at 2016 was USD 4,641,464.84 with USD 462,193.66 "lost" due to exchange rate movements.

² USD 5,000 was received from Dermalogica, USD 50,000 from UNCDF, and USD 23,500 from Catapult. A contribution of USD 30,000 from Garanti Bank is currently pending.

Figure 1: Knowledge Gateway/Empower Women key developments by year:



Overall, since its launch, the platform features have been continuously expanded based upon the interests of target groups, as well as being complemented by different offline initiatives. As at the end of September 2016, 14,437 women and men from the private sector, civil society, academia, governments, and international organizations across 198 countries are registered members and the platform has been visited almost 800,000 times. In addition, more than 200,000 people follow Empower Women via social media, while 208 champions from 64 countries play a further crucial role in bringing the initiative to life and extending its outreach at a national level. These developments have been made possible by a growing team, but setbacks have been suffered due to the loss of regional coordinators in Panama, Thailand, and Senegal. Nevertheless, the platform has been strengthened through a number of partnerships with other organizations, including UN agencies, private sector companies, CSOs, foundations, governments, and academia.

Empower Women is managed by a core project team based at the UN Women's Headquarters in New York, as well as by three regional coordinators currently operating from UN Women's Regional Offices (ROs) in Kenya, Egypt, and Turkey. Regional Coordinators add relevant regional content to the platform, manage the relationships with Empower Women's champions, and coordinate activities regionally, creating local partnerships, and representing the initiative at events.

Intervention Logic

During the inception phase of this evaluation, the evaluation team revised the original project documentation and its corresponding logical framework. In a consultative process with EW's project team and the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), it concluded that the original intervention logic cannot be used as the only reference for assessing the results achieved, as it does not adequately reflect all of the activities that have been subsequently added to the

project. Therefore, the consultants developed a Theory of Change (ToC) that aims to capture the common logical denominators that have shaped the project work during the period under evaluation. Due to EW's evolving and innovative nature, the thinking around how change is generated has also developed over time, but this has not been captured formally, e.g. in an adapted logical framework. To reflect new developments and activities that have taken place over time, the evaluation team integrated elements from the original logical framework described in the initial project document (ProDoc) with new ideas formulated at later stages.

The ToC aims to describe the logical results chain of change that takes place at the individual and group level, organizational level, and systemic level through the implementation of project activities. The underlying logic is that, through the resources and opportunities offered by EW, women and men acquire new skills, knowledge, awareness, and improved connectivity on WEE, which in turn translates into increased capacity to become leaders and change agents for WEE. This empowerment at the individual level will boost both individual and collective action, resulting in a change at the organizational level and ultimately creating long-term ripple effects at the systemic level.³

Evaluation Methodology

During the evaluation exercise, the evaluation team has used the revised ToC as a basis to develop concise evaluation questions and related indicators on which data has been collected with the participation of different stakeholders. The evaluation team has integrated into this a gender equality and human rights approach by ensuring that the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including different user groups, are represented and actively involved in the validation of the ToC, and by interrogating the transformational and innovative nature of EW in its achievements of broader gender equality and implementation of human rights.

This evaluation follows the evaluation criteria defined by the OECD DAC criteria outlined below. A Human Rights and Gender Equality (HR&GE) dimension has been integrated across all criteria, as well as a stand-alone criterion.

Table 1: Evaluation analysis according to OECD DAC criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Analysis conducted
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment of the alignment of Empower Women with UN's Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017, UN Women's MTR on WEE, the SDGs, and the Flagship Programme Initiatives (FPIs) on WEE. ▪ Assessment of how appropriate was the project design and its guidance by international conventions, principles and protocols and whether it has integrated adequate GE & HR analysis. ▪ Relevance for different target audiences and stakeholders. ▪ Analysis of whether GE & HR principles were considered in the objectives of the intervention, whether the design process of Empower Women was informed by the needs and interests of the diverse groups of stakeholders, and whether it has employed HR&GE responsive methodological approaches.
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of the extent to which intended outputs were achieved and whether the programme contributed to the achievement of the outcomes in a GE & HR responsive way. ▪ Identification of accelerating factors, obstacles, missed opportunities, effective management, and partnership arrangements.
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of the extent to which the funding, personnel, administrative arrangements, partnerships, governance arrangements, time, and other inputs either contributed to or hindered the achievements of the results.
HR & GE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of the extent to which the human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated into both the programme design and implementation process of Empower Women. ▪ Analysis of the extent to which the most excluded groups have access to and benefit from Empower Women. ▪ Identification of the structural elements that enable or hinder the access, use and

³ A detailed description of the ToC and its individual elements can be found in the Annex of this report.

	benefits for these groups.
Potential impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of the extent to which positive and negative changes and effects have resulted from the project. ▪ Identification of unintended effects. ▪ Analysis of the effectiveness of Empower Women's online activities with alternative interventions.
Potential sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analysis of the extent to which the outcomes of the programme are likely to continue beyond 2016. ▪ Analysis of the extent to which the development of knowledge products and the implementation of capacity building activities have transferred knowledge and created further impact. ▪ Analysis of challenges, opportunities, and best practices.

Each evaluation criterion has been translated into specific evaluation questions, which were answered using one or more of the following data collection instruments:

1. **Document review:** More than fifty documents were reviewed; analysis of online data from Sitecore, Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, and YouTube Analytics.
2. **Qualitative interviews:** Conducted over Skype or telephone; a total number of 74 qualitative interviews were conducted with UNW's staff including 6 EW staff, 25 UNW staff, 29 EW users (champions), 16 EW partners, and 4 external experts.
3. **Online surveys:** Sent out via email to registered and non-registered users and selected staff from UNW. A total of 776 registered users, 68 non-registered users, 25 EW partners, and 41 UN Women staff completed the survey.

Although the mitigation of certain constraints was anticipated, the evaluation team still encountered the following limitations:

- Some groups could not be included, especially the most vulnerable communities, since vulnerable groups could not be clearly identified as direct beneficiaries of EW. Secondly, there was no specific contact information available and it was not possible to reach out directly to these groups.
- In total, there have been 776 responses to the user survey which represents 5.3% of the total users. Due to a non-response bias, 65% of the respondents were active and engaged users, and fewer responses (35%) have been received from less active users.
- Data Gaps: part of the data in Google Analytics was incorrectly reported between May 2014 and March 2016, as tracking codes were not implemented correctly, leading to metrics in Google Analytics that were not totally reliable. Some information (performance data on Twitter, number of offline vs online events, number of downloaded documents, etc.) could not be compiled for the whole time period under evaluation for analysis.
- Feedback from a small number of key staff members of UNW could not be included in the evaluation as they were unavailable for interviews.

Main Findings

The main findings of this evaluation are presented according to the defined evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, human rights and gender equality (HR and GE), sustainability, and potential impact.

▪ **Relevance**

Overall, the relevance of EW has been confirmed through this evaluation, both in terms of its general relevance to UNW's strategic priorities regarding WEE and within the context of international standards and conventions on GE and women's rights, as well as its relevance for users and external stakeholders. Although EW was initially designed to report to the management results framework (MRF) of UNW's Strategic Plan (SP), rather than directly

contributing to the development results framework (DRF), EW also aligns with impact area two of WEE and more specifically, with the strategic plan outcome 2.3⁴.

EW was designed through a consultative and participatory process that involved different types of stakeholders⁵ and it has been evolving based on user feedback and consultations that have taken place during the implementation process. In this sense, the project has taken a human-centred design approach that includes listening to the needs and interests of users and other stakeholders, and being highly flexible in adapting the project to those needs, given what was possible based on the limited resources available. EW has evolved over time in order to adapt to changing realities and this is reflected in the revised ToC which shows the actual project implementation used to achieve the intended outputs and outcomes. This evolution has resulted in the incorporation of new and innovative activities, such as social media, the Global Community Champions Initiative (GCCCI), and offline events.

In general, most of the stakeholders perceive all of the project activities to be relevant and consistent with achieving the project goals, although some activities, such as the GCCCI, are perceived to be more relevant than others. Users are satisfied with the different aspects of the initiative, but they also perceive EW to be lacking in overall clarity regarding which target audience the project aims to reach, as well as regarding the overall editorial concept and cohesiveness. This suggests the need to provide a more structured, curated and easily accessible content and the need to define clear thematic areas.

Collaborations with external partners and departments of UNW have added to EW's relevance as they have enhanced the project's content and capacity building offer, as well as increasing outreach to the user base.

Around 100 organizations have collaborated with EW at global and regional levels and most of them perceive this collaboration to be relevant and aligned with their own objectives. Partners have expressed their interest in continuing to work with EW, and most of them would like to upscale or redefine the cooperation in the future. Most of the collaborations have been informal, which has given EW the flexibility to quickly engage without the need for administrative red-tape. However, many of the partnerships have been sporadic rather than long-term and strategic, and partners have expressed interest in defining clear objectives and expected results. EW has selected collaborations with entities that show a high interest in or alignment with EW's objectives, resulting in relevant contributions being made by these entities in terms of providing content, capacity building opportunities, as well as enhancing EW's outreach. These collaborations have been established mainly with international organizations and private companies at the global level, while at a regional level, the focus has been with NGOs and private sector organizations.

At the same time, while EW functions as a relevant knowledge management platform for UNW, there is considerable opportunity for improving this function. Synergies created with departments of UNW have been perceived as highly relevant, especially at the regional and national level, as these have added locally relevant content to the platform which in turn enhances EW's relevance. Some of the collaborations with other UNW departments and offices have also contributed to increasing local outreach of the project, but synergies have not been created systematically in all regions.

a) Effectiveness and potential impact

The findings show that EW has successfully positioned itself as a knowledge hub on WEE and has generated positive outcomes and results for its users by providing a platform that increases access to information, knowledge, capacity building, networks, as well as opportunities on WEE.

⁴ UN Women's strategic plan 2014-2017

⁵ An advisory board was set up that included six experts from CIDA, FAO, the International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE), ILO, UNW, and the World Bank. In addition, UNW's networks and partners were consulted via a global survey in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. The survey received 1,636 responses.

Empower Women has successfully established a relevant online platform, achieving global outreach through its registered member base of 14.437 people from 198 countries, including a considerable number of men (16% of registered members are men, while 83% are women and 1% fall under “other” gender categories). In addition, 551.360 unique users worldwide have visited the platform during the time period under evaluation.

User profiles show that EW has been most successful so far in attracting people from urban areas with higher education levels from the intermediary target group – mostly entrepreneurs and freelancers, employees from NGOs, and private sector organizations, and to a lesser extent students. Based on data from the user survey, EW has been less successful in reaching the enabling environment: policy makers from government or multilateral organizations represent only a smaller share of users. It could not be confirmed whether vulnerable or marginalized women⁶ are among the direct ultimate beneficiaries of the online platform, although they could have been reached indirectly through NGOs and other users working with these groups.

An average of 35% of worldwide users has been returning to the platform, which indicates they see it as a relevant and useful source of information, knowledge exchange, and as a place for networking.⁷ However, engagement on the platform has been limited, as contributions to the platform in the form of content uploads, discussion contributions, and comments are mainly coming from a small group of core users that make up around 9% of the registered member base and are in fact mostly EW champions or members of EW's team. On the other hand, this would suggest that the majority of users visit the site to access information, confirming its positioning as a knowledge resource.

While Arabic, French and Spanish versions of EW were launched in early 2015, EW's team has found it challenging to maintain the different language versions with content and successfully manage engagement on these different language sites due to limited resources. In this regard, EW has not yet achieved to become an inclusive platform for users from non-English speaking countries. High developed English-speaking countries, such as the USA, Canada, Australia, and the UK represent a greater number of users and generate 43% of sessions. The BRICS countries India and South Africa add a further 13%. The only exceptions to this rule are Brazil (has generated 4% of total sessions) and Egypt (accounts for approximately 3% of the sessions). The remaining 40% are spread across a wide range of countries from all regions. One important aspect to highlight is that countries where EW's team has a geographical presence are among those that have the most registered users and sessions, indicating a link between local offline engagement and online activity - especially in the USA, Kenya, Egypt, and Turkey.

Overall, 95% of survey respondents have confirmed that EW has helped them to increase their capacities and skills, and due to this, they have been able to take action in both their private lives and in their work environment to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. The type of skills gained relate mostly to advocacy, networking, and action on WEE, as well as to designing and delivering services for women. Capacities and skills that have been least gained were related to the labour market and business development, as well as to the formulation of laws, policies, and strategies.

Although much of the positive effects have occurred at the individual level, the results of the user survey confirmed as being valid EW's assumption that a trigger effect can be generated from the individual to the institutional and systemic level. The most important changes indicated were that users are more engaged with WEE and GE thanks to EW and their self-confidence has increased. A significant percentage of survey respondents claimed that they have had a positive influence on their family members, who in turn are now more aware of WEE issues, and

⁶ Defined as women with low incomes and/or low education levels, including rural women, domestic workers, migrants and low-skilled women.

⁷ There is no fixed benchmark for what is considered to be a satisfactory returning visitor rate, but 35% is regarded as positive by the evaluators. It means that more than one third of visitors have returned to the site.

that they have achieved greater equality in their relationships with family members. Thanks to their increased skills gained from EW, users have also started to take actions regarding WEE within their communities and stated that their communities are now more aware of WEE issues. In addition, users reported that changes have occurred at the organizations where they work due to their increased knowledge. These are mostly related to the users' direct action on promoting women's empowerment, which reportedly has influenced their organizations to engage in policies or programs on GE.

In order to achieve these results, EW has made good use of a combination of online and offline activities, as well as introducing new innovative approaches that have proven to be effective in terms of creating results, such as the GCCI (Global Champions for Change Initiative), social media channels, as well as collaborations with diverse organizations and departments / offices of UNW. Regarding the latter, opportunities for increasing effectiveness further exist, by taking a more systematic partnership approach.

EW has become successful in leveraging social media for outreach, communication, and advocacy campaigns. It has effectively established a large community of followers on Facebook and Twitter, which are also important complementary channels for the champions to network and engage in discussions.

Partnerships or collaborations with different organizations have been crucial for conducting offline activities, as the project lacks allocated resources for this activity. Although there is no reliable data to evaluate results regarding offline events, it can be assumed that offline activities have contributed to creating outreach and usage of the online space, considering that most offline events have been taking place in countries that show higher numbers of users and sessions. Collaborations with different organizations have also made an important contribution in terms of providing quality content, enhancing technology, as well as creating outreach.

In addition, EW's team has involved sections and departments of UNW at global, regional and national levels, although not in a systematic way. These collaborations have been built around three focus areas: engaging with partners, content sourcing, and communication and outreach. There is general interest from UNW's staff to collaborate more closely with EW, but UNW's overall time and budget constraints, as well as weak internal communication, has made cooperation throughout the organization challenging.

b) Human Rights and Gender Equality

Through its different resources and initiatives, EW defines WEE implicitly as both a process and a result that enables women to enjoy economic rights and take decisions that impact both their own lives as well as influencing others, and that opens up opportunities for women to achieve other dimensions of empowerment such as political and social empowerment. Also, in an implicit way, EW frames WEE as both a human right and smart economics.

Through these different approaches, EW has been engaging with and sensitizing women and men to understand WEE as an interplay between personal and political realms, raising their awareness and encouraging their collective action. However, EW has not yet been able to overcome the factors that restrict or influence the participation of vulnerable groups despite some of the initiatives being targeted at this population, such as the iLearn platform or the GCCI (Global Champions for Change Initiative).

c) Efficiency

Empower Women has allocated most of its financial resources to implement IT, communications and outreach activities, as well as research and content development, hence reflecting the priority focus given to technological innovation and communications⁸. M&E and knowledge management activities have been awarded the lowest allocation of funds⁹. Additionally, staff

⁸ The amounts were calculated without staff costs included.

⁹ However, the general work of EW's team members includes knowledge management and some sporadic M&E activities, apart from the mid-term and final evaluation, are also carried out by staff.

costs have been allocated under research and content development activities, outreach, and communication and knowledge management. EW also paid UNW's onsite contractors under IT activities. While the project has received additional funding from private donors, it also lost 9% of the initial project budget due to exchange rate movements and hence, has had fewer resources available than initially planned.

During the past years of the project implementation, EW's team has had to cope with constant staff fluctuations that ultimately resulted in fewer team members, as well as with an ever-increasing workload due to the subsequent enhancements of the project with features and activities that were not originally planned but added to meet stakeholders' needs and requirements. In 2013, Empower Women had only 1,232 registered users but this has been steadily increasing and now stands at 14,437 registered users, as of September 2016. This growth has been accompanied by an increase in both the number of champions' applications and the number of champions selected. There has also been a significant increase in the number of social media posts. In addition, based on the information collected, the number of offline events and webinars, as well as the number of stories and uploads to the library, have been increasing over this time period.

Table 2: Budget allocation and implementation of main activities per year

	PLANNED	2013¹⁰	2014	2015	2016
Budget	\$4,641,465	\$819,575	\$1,126,780	\$1,321,259	\$1,354,370¹¹
Human Resources	8 (2) Project Manager and a Knowledge Management Specialist + 6 regional coordinators (Bangkok, Cairo, Istanbul, Panama, Dakar and Nairobi)	5 (2) Project Manager and a Knowledge Management Specialist, + 3 regional coordinators (Bangkok, Cairo and Nairobi)	7 (3) Project Manager and a Knowledge Management Specialist, plus communications consultant + 5 Regional coordinators (Cairo, Panama, Dakar, Bangkok and Nairobi) + MTR with New School	8 (3) Project Manager and a Knowledge Management Specialist, plus communications consultant + 5 Regional Coordinators (Cairo, Istanbul, Panama, Bangkok and Nairobi) + PwC Re-design Assessment + iLearn Facebook + ActionSprout	5 (3) Project Manager and a Knowledge Management Specialist, plus program specialist + 2 Regional Coordinators (Cairo and Istanbul) and one consultant in Nairobi
Registered Users	n/a	1,232	3,910	9,486	14,437
Champions' Applications	n/a	150	400+600	650	4000¹²
Selected Champions	n/a	29	44+60	75	TBC¹³
Webinars¹⁴	n/a	n/a	2	9	9
Offline events¹⁵	n/a	1	9	20	36

¹⁰ This includes implementation years 2012 and 2013.

¹¹ Projected funds up until December 2016.

¹² In the most recent call 2016-2017, EW received 4,000 applications.

¹³ At the end of 2016, forecast is that EW will select 180 champions.

¹⁴ Numbers are estimated, complete tracking has not been possible.

	PLANNED	2013 ¹⁰	2014	2015	2016
Stories		7	63	540	275
Resources and publications uploads	n/a	412	779	877	300
Videos uploads	n/a	21	62	46	78
Likes Facebook		1128	5555	34,497	1,847,425
Posts Facebook	n/a	104	373	1650	1413
Partners	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	99

This greater level of activity has resulted in the need for EW's team either to work extra hours or to leverage the help of volunteers, resources from partnerships with external organizations and the champions as additional resources. Partnerships with private technology companies have been especially important, as they have facilitated the use of innovative technology to reach broader audiences. With limited financial cost, EW has also implemented some activities that were aimed at reaching the most vulnerable populations (iLearn, champions' initiatives).

Based on the work plans, all activities were implemented as anticipated with the exception of the communities of practice (CoP) and a learning development activity¹⁶ that was partially completed. Despite the effective management of the champion's community, there is no evidence that demonstrates management of the organizational member space (formerly Business Hub) community of practice or the rural women's technologies community of practice that were planned¹⁷. Some other activities could not be completed due to staff and time constraints, such as management of the different language versions of the platform or monitoring activities. Regarding the latter, there is no formal monitoring system in place that allows EW to systematically collect and analyze data on online or offline activities. In general, UNW's staff, partners, and users perceive that more information is needed regarding the results that have been achieved. This is particularly important if EW intends to encourage private sector organizations to join the platform, or to attract funding from new donors.

d) Sustainability

The results achieved by EW at the output and outcome level are likely to be sustainable, as they are related to ideas, knowledge and engagement. Complementing findings from survey data, champions have confirmed in interviews that the effects of EW are long lasting. In addition, many users and champions pass their experiences and knowledge on to family and community members, and a majority of champions stated they remain engaged with EW and WEE issues beyond their championship period. However, a number of internal and external factors can positively or negatively influence EW's sustainability:

¹⁵ Offline events relates to offline conferences, workshops and events supported by EW. Numbers are estimated, complete tracking has not been possible.

¹⁶ Work Stream E: communities of practice and learning development activity is included in the Annual Work plan 2014-2015

¹⁷ See Donor Report 2014-2015

Figure 2: Internal and external enabling factors and internal and external limiting factors

<p>Internal enabling factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EW has a highly motivated, flexible, and innovative team that quickly adapts to the changing environment and to user's needs. • EW is based on knowledge and skills transfer and has successfully built a strong community that is engaged with WEE. • GCCI is an asset for EW as it represents an opportunity to conduct bottom-up innovation. 	<p>Internal limiting factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EW's team is small in relation to the high workload, and has to cope with staff volatility at a regional level, as well as with unstable IT support. • Limited capacities are available for monitoring results. • Weak integration into UNW's programming at both regional and country levels.
<p>External enabling factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International development agenda focuses on women's economic empowerment • ICT and digital development are also high on the agenda. • UNW is planning to integrate WEPs into FPIs, presenting EW with the opportunity to align with the Business Hub. • Partnerships and champions add to the sustainability of EW by providing additional resources and creating outreach. 	<p>External limiting factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial stability for the project is not secured although there are several opportunities to receive funding from the FPs as well as mobilizing additional funding from external donors.

The ability to innovate is critical if EW is to remain relevant in a rapidly changing digital environment. Assuming EW manages to overcome the bottlenecks related to the lack of resources available and can leverage partnerships and synergies with UNW's regional and country offices better, positive results can be increased. The main challenges for further enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of the project are related to overcoming language barriers, improving the editorial cohesion through clearer thematic segmentation and an explicit overall approach to WEE, and also improving the interactivity on the website. In addition, EW needs to provide a clearer segmentation of target audiences, as well as specific information and opportunities that meet the needs of the different segments, especially the private sector and the vulnerable communities. Policy makers should also be included along with young people, men, and populations living in high-level income countries and women at the work place.

In this sense, it is anticipated that the planned integration of the WEPs into EW and the Virtual Skills School currently under development, as well as an alignment with UNW's FPIs on WEE can add to EW's relevance for different target groups.

However, EW should assess who are the key target audiences that the project is aiming to reach, as one finding of this evaluation is that the broad definition of the target audience could be a hindrance to effective engagement with key groups. In this sense, EW needs to take a decision on whether it wants to grow by further expanding its target audiences, or whether it wants to increase outreach and deepen relationships with a smaller number of defined target groups. Opportunities and actions recommended to reach selected audiences are described in the table below:

Table 3: Opportunities and actions recommended for target audiences

Target audiences	Opportunities	Actions
<p>Reach vulnerable populations</p>	<p>Offline engagement, partnerships with grass roots organizations/NGOs or with private companies, and the champions programme constitute opportunities to reach people from the most vulnerable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overcome language barriers and provide more content on the Spanish, French and Arabic versions. Expand the number of languages provided by the website to include Portuguese, Chinese and Russian versions.

Target audiences	Opportunities	Actions
	population who lack access to internet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt communication and language style. Re-adjust the content available on the platform in order to become more relevant or accessible. Strengthen relationships with CSOs and the private sector.
Reach young people	Social media are effective mechanisms for providing short messages and to regularly inform younger users about new EW campaigns, events, and opportunities launched on the website. This indicates that this population segment is looking for relevant, accurate, data-based and up-to-date information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facts, news, links of interest, campaigns and quotes as well as the use of more visual content, such as pictures and videos, can result in further engagement of this population group. Organize offline events and young entrepreneurs' trainings with the support of universities, NGOs or private companies.
Reach developed and developing countries populations	Most users of EW come from high-income countries, especially English-speaking countries. These countries have also registered the highest number of champions. This shows that there is a potential to achieve greater engagement in countries with a higher HDI and a higher internet penetration rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create more content in French or Spanish. Launch initiatives or trainings addressed at women and men who work with vulnerable groups and who tackle gender equality issues. Launch initiatives or trainings addressed at women and men who are interested in promoting gender equality among their communities, families or at their workplace.
Reach men	Men have expressed a higher level of interest, satisfaction, and use of the platform compared to women. These are mainly men whose work is focused on gender equality issues or who provide technical and financial support to women's organizations. They see themselves as agents of change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct additional research on men's engagement with WEE to better understand their motivation and aspirations and to be able to provide specific content of interest. Launch initiatives or trainings addressed at this specific group to encourage participation.
Reach women at the work place	Investing in women's employment is now considered to be the key that unlocks growth in developing countries. There are many studies that demonstrate that economic growth is more robust and sustainable when women and men alike participate fully in the labour market. Companies that invest in women's employment gain an important competitive advantage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide materials and specific content that empowers women in their places of work, as well as tools to advocate for their equal rights as women. This approach will have to be complemented by working directly with private sector organizations that can promote gender equality policies in companies. The WEPs provide an opportunity as an entry point for the private sector to engage with EW.

The sustainability of EW can also be ensured through an alignment with UNW's Flagship Programme Initiatives (FPI) on WEE. EW can become an opportunity for the FPIs as a space where knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned related to the different subject areas can be disseminated and shared. It could also represent a virtual space that enhances connectivity between users through communities of practice, which could be created in line with the FPIs' thematic priorities. At the same time, EW can benefit from an alignment with the FPIs as this would allow for an integration of EW's activities into global, regional and national work plans, presenting an opportunity to improve synergies between EW's team and UNW's programme teams. Additionally, there is an opportunity to leverage the organizational member section (formerly Business Hub) in combination with the newly integrated WEPs as an entry point to improve engagement of the business community with UNW. This could also become an opportunity for resource mobilization.

Conclusions

The previous section presented and analysed findings of the evaluation that correspond to EW's relevance, effectiveness, HR&GE approach, efficiency and sustainability. Based on these findings, this section summarizes the main conclusions reached; the subsequent section presents lessons learned, and ultimately a set of recommendations is presented that propose improvements for EW's future approaches and project implementation.

- **Conclusion 1:** EW has proven to be a relevant initiative regarding both UNW's strategic priorities related to WEE as well within the context of international standards and conventions on GE and women's rights. (*Relevance*)
- **Conclusion 2:** EW is an innovative project that has been evolving and adapting to new realities over time, while maintaining the overall alignment of the activities subsequently added with the projects' objectives. This has resulted in an enhanced relevance of the activities for a wide range of stakeholders, although there are still opportunities to improve editorial cohesion and to provide a clearer segmentation of the target audiences (*Relevance*)
- **Conclusion 3:** Collaborations with external organizations and with departments of UNW have contributed to the projects' relevance, effectiveness and efficiency through adding content and resources to the platform, supporting technology development and innovation, and providing outreach and capacity building online and offline. (*Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency*)
- **Conclusion 4:** EW has been successful in creating outreach on a global scale, attracting women and men from 198 countries. However, a clear trend can be identified of users coming from urban areas with higher education levels and from English speaking countries. Therefore, EW has the opportunity to test new approaches for improved ways to reach wider audiences from lower income countries, as well as concentrating efforts on more effectively reaching out to Arabic, French and Spanish speaking communities. (*Effectiveness*)
- **Conclusion 5:** The user profiles show that EW is a platform that attracts professionals as well as individuals from all sectors, confirming that WEE is a topic of broad societal interest. The majority of EW users are self-employed or work in the NGO sector. Employees from public institutions or from multilateral organizations represent a smaller share of users, suggesting that EW attracts more users from the grassroots level than from international and global institutions. (*Effectiveness*)
- **Conclusion 6:** Despite the broad outreach to 551.360 users and 14.437 registered members that the platform has attracted over the past three years, the active engagement on the platform is limited to a core group of active users, most of them champions. Social media provide an important complementary space for engagement with wider audiences. (*Effectiveness*)
- **Conclusion 7:** EW has generated positive results both at the output and outcome level, indicating that EW effectively contributes to increased knowledge, access to capacity building, as well as increased networking opportunities for its users. In addition, users benefit from EW in terms of increased skills and capacities to advocate for WEE and take individual or collective action on WEE. Data also indicate that EW makes a contribution to generating changes at the individual, organizational, and systemic level. (*Effectiveness*)
- **Conclusion 8:** While all of the activities implemented by EW - planned or unplanned - have contributed to producing results in different ways, the GCCI (Global Champions for Change Initiative) needs to be highlighted as the most important and innovative activity of the project. It has significantly increased EW's visibility and outreach online and offline and has also delivered most of the engagement on the online platform. (*Effectiveness and Sustainability*)

- **Conclusion 9:** EW is an evolving project that takes an innovative approach to WEE and adequately responds to stakeholders' needs and interests. However, there is no evidence that demonstrates that EW has reached the most vulnerable women (*HR&GE , Effectiveness*)
- **Conclusion 10:** EW has been successful in engaging with and sensitizing women and men to understand the interplay between the personal and the political realms, raising their awareness and encouraging their collective action. (*HR&GE and Effectiveness*)
- **Conclusion 11:** Despite limited financial resources and a reduction in human resources, EW's team has been able to manage a platform that has incorporated new activities and has experienced an unexpected level of growth. (*Efficiency*)
- **Conclusion 12:** EW's team has so far missed out on the opportunity to strengthen and better integrate a results-based management culture that can help improve performance and enhance working practices by facilitating the monitoring of results and the production of robust data for informed decision-making, effective communication, and mobilization of resources. (*Efficiency*)
- **Conclusion 13:** EW has the opportunity to reach wider audiences, such as vulnerable populations and young people, in order to be inclusive and "leave no one behind". (*Sustainability*)
- **Conclusion 14:** Taking into consideration that the financial sustainability of EW is currently not guaranteed, an alignment of EW with UNW's FPIs could facilitate the allocation of UNW core funds for key project activities, while resources from donors or the private sector could complement this core funding to further sustain EW's innovative nature. (*Sustainability*)

Lessons Learned

- **Lesson learned 1:** Design thinking and a human-centered approach facilitates bottom-up innovation and ensures the project's relevance.
- **Lesson learned 2:** The willingness to take risks and test new approaches facilitates innovation.
- **Lesson learned 3:** Adopting a combination of complementary online and offline engagement channels using a partnership approach leads to effective results.
- **Lesson Learned 4:** Open and democratic online spaces, such as EW, facilitate participation and ensure that every voice is heard.
- **Lesson Learned 5:** Leveraging technology and innovation through partnerships with the private sector provides an important contribution towards achieving sustainable development goals.
- **Lesson learned 6:** Weak progress and results monitoring limits the capacity to take evidence-based decisions and to demonstrate and communicate results.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Leverage the recently created Flagship Programme Initiatives in the area of WEE and align EW with them. (Based on Conclusion 2, 3, 14)
- **Recommendation 2:** Create a resource mobilization action plan for phase two that includes financing key project activities through UNW core funds, while project funds from external organizations – public or private – should be added to maintain EW's flexibility and innovative nature. (Based on Conclusions 12, 14)
- **Recommendation 3:** Develop a thorough partnership strategy for WEE that identifies those organizations that have the potential to contribute to UNW's EE section and to EW in particular, and that deliver the highest added value. In addition, prioritize the quality of collaborations over quantity. (Based on Conclusions 3, 4, 9)
- **Recommendation 4:** Leverage the GCCI (Global Champions for Change Initiative) in order to continue reaching wider audiences, including vulnerable populations. (Based on Conclusions 6, 8, 9, 10, 13)
- **Recommendation 5:** Improve internal communication with UNW and leverage UNW's structures in a better way to facilitate project implementation more efficiently and improve results. (Based on Conclusion 3, 4)
- **Recommendation 6:** Improve the online platform to enhance clarity on EW's objectives and target audiences, to increase user friendliness and to better meet users' needs. (Based on Conclusions 2, 4, 5, 10, 13, 14)
- **Recommendation 7:** Develop a Monitoring & Evaluation framework with a results-based management approach in order to systematically collect and analyse standardized data for informed decision making. (Based on Conclusions 8, 9, 12)
- **Recommendation 8:** Assign a specific section within the platform exclusively to the private sector in order to engage the business community in a more proactive way and maintain the relevance of the WEPs (Based on Conclusions 2, 14)