



EVALUATION BRIEF



PARTNERING FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

Corporate evaluation of UN Women's Strategic Partnerships for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

May 2017

The transformative vision of the sustainable development agenda adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015 places new demands on the scale, scope and ambition of UN Women's strategic partnerships to achieve transformative change by 2030. In particular, the SDG Agenda sets unprecedented and ambitious goals and targets for gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) (specifically the stand-alone gender goal 5 and GEEW targets under the other goals) that will require the commitment of a wide diversity of stakeholders for their achievement.

Partnerships are an essential aspect of our work, but are often overlooked when we evaluate the results of our work. The skill set, time and resources necessary for ensuring truly effective strategic partnerships are often underestimated. In 2015-2016, the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office undertook a corporate evaluation of UN Women's Strategic Partnerships for GEEW. The evaluation is intended to enhance UN Women's approach to strategic partnerships with the aim of ensuring that gender equality is reached by 2030. It was also expected to contribute to an understanding of how UN Women's strategic partnerships can facilitate a strong position for GEEW within the current global development context and the 2030 Agenda.

What did the evaluation conclude?

1. UN Women strategic partnerships have contributed significantly to advancing GEEW in the framework of the Strategic Plan. At their most effective, strategic partnerships have extended the reach, credibility, and influence of UN Women and its partners.
2. Fostering a shared UN Women vision for strategic partnerships, and consolidating a coherent and flexible organizational approach to implementing this vision, should now be the focus for delivering on the promise of Agenda 2030.
3. UN Women's organizational structures, operations systems and approach to risk were not originally designed with the explicit aim of supporting strategic partnerships. Consequently, there is still a need for a comprehensive policy framework towards strategic partnerships.
4. UN Women's strategic partnerships are consistently aligned to principles outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. However, in field operations, the modalities of partnership available warrant being adjusted to better suit the needs of smaller partners, especially rights holders' organizations, and to fully reflect UN Women's feminist values.

Read the full report at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation/corporate-evaluations>

Read TRANSFORM at www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation/news

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation>

5. UN Women must continue to see partnerships with civil society within the broader picture of building an inclusive movement for GEEW. Ensuring that this approach is clear at all levels of UN Women and emphasizing the importance of mutual accountability in partnerships with civil society are the two main priorities.

6. There has been a rapid evolution of UN Women's approach to corporate partnerships, including innovative methods. These efforts have resulted in many successes and lessons, but also substantial reputational risks.

7. Inconsistencies between the priorities and operational systems of different UN entities at the country level means different members of the UN Country Team are frequently found to be maintaining separate bilateral (and sometimes competitive) relationships with a single strategic partner, resulting in inefficiencies.

8. UN Women would likely benefit from having a more coordinated approach to working in partnership with the various agencies of Member States with which it engages at the global, regional and country level.

How can UN Women improve?

The following recommendations to UN Women are based on the evaluation framework, the analysis that informed findings and conclusions, and discussions held with stakeholders.

1. Establish a sufficiently resourced, integrated and commonly agreed framework for strategic partnerships as a central part of UN Women's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan.

2. Within the proposed framework for strategic partnerships, establish clarity regarding roles and responsibilities within the current UN Women structures that will best support strategic partnerships.

3. Undertake a systematic process of integrating strategic partnership considerations in the day-to-day workflow and tools used by leaders, managers and staff at all levels.

4. Further leverage UN Women's experience in using strategic partnerships to convene and mediate between different world views by shaping multi-stakeholder spaces and platforms for dialogue and innovation.

5. Extend UN-Women's global approach to movement-building to country-level work with civil society organizations to address the core capacity of women's organizations.

6. Address the dual relationship with private enterprises and public companies as both funders and a target of advocacy by establishing clearer coordination between UN Women teams to ensure an integrated approach and gradually diversifying relationships beyond corporations to individual donors and foundations.

7. Identify and address barriers to country-level UN coordination of relationships with strategic partners that work with multiple UN entities.

8. Establish a model for a strategic partnership between UN-Women and the various agencies within a Member State that supports coordination between the role of that state in intergovernmental processes, regional mechanisms, global and local donorship, and the global economy.

METHODOLOGY

THE EVALUATION APPROACH WAS THREE-PRONGED, COMPRISING UTILIZATION-FOCUSED, THEORY-DRIVEN (REALIST EVALUATION) AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE AND HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES.

DATA COLLECTED FOR THIS EVALUATION

261 Interviews

UN, Govts, CSOs, Corps, Academia, and others



212 women

49 men

at global, regional and country levels

Case Studies

5 Decentralized Case Studies

2 COs/ROs
2 COs
1 MCO
1 HQ assessment

Portfolio review

35 Strategic Partnerships

5 HQ
15 from 5 case studies
15 from 5 additional countries

500+ documents

Social Learning

1,650 twitter followers
600+ readers, online discussion