



CORPORATE THEMATIC EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Final Report



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UN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION
TO HUMANITARIAN ACTION



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION AND AUDIT SERVICES (IEAS)

Independent Evaluation Service (IES)

UN WOMEN

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADPC	Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre
CAR	Central African Republic
CBPF	Country Based Pooled Funds
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
GAM	Gender and Age Marker
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction
GIHA	Gender in Humanitarian Action
GIR	Gender Inequality of Risk
GRG	Gender Reference Group
HA	Humanitarian Action
HACRO	Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response Office of UN Women
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDN	Humanitarian Development Nexus
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IDTF	Interdivisional Task Force
IES	Independent Evaluation Service

IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
LEAP	Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection
LGBTIQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer
MCO	Multi-Country Office
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NWOW	New Way of Working
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECD DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territory
RMS	Results Management System (UN Women)
SCP	Gender Standby Capacity Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SOGIE	Sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDS	United Nations Development System
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
US\$	United States Dollar
WCDR	World Conference on Disaster Reduction
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
WPHF	Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund

FOREWORD



The centrality of ensuring that gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) are fundamental in humanitarian action has been repeatedly emphasized in international forums, including the 60th Commission on the Status of Women and the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). UN Women's work in humanitarian action is focused on this pressing need: ensuring that women and girls play a greater role in, and are better served by, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response and recovery process efforts in order to support their empowerment and resilience. This formative evaluation of UN Women's contribution to humanitarian action therefore comes at the right time to help us understand the evolution of UN Women's work in this area and its role in the humanitarian context.

The Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS) undertook this evaluation as part of its corporate evaluation plan. IES assessed the relevance and appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency, connectedness and sustainability, and extent to which a human rights approach and gender equality principles were integrated in UN Women's humanitarian action work across its integrated mandate: normative, operational and coordination at country, regional and global levels.

The evaluation found that the evolution and trajectory of UN Women's work in humanitarian action since 2014 has been positive. By 2018, UN Women's contributions to humanitarian action included: crisis prevention; preparedness; responses to reduce vulnerabilities, addressing risks and promoting resilience; and leveraging of women's leadership across the humanitarian–development nexus. UN Women effectively supported normative work

to assist Member States and the United Nations in developing and implementing humanitarian action policies. The Entity also assumed the role of GEWE coordinator for the United Nations system and the humanitarian community at various programming levels during humanitarian responses.

The evaluation concludes that while the growth in UN Women's humanitarian work is positive, a more strategic and consistent approach is needed to make further progress. This will require a new detailed, response-level strategy with specific approaches to effectively engage in coordination mechanisms, as well as innovative resource mobilization strategies, partnerships, and knowledge management and learning initiatives. Increasing the effectiveness and impact of UN Women's humanitarian action work to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable women and girls are among the recommendations of this evaluation.

The management response and action plan presented by UN Women acknowledges the need to use this formative evaluation to inform future humanitarian work strategies and plans. It confirms UN Women's commitment to learn from its experience and use gender-responsive evidence of what works and what doesn't to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Sutton". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lisa Sutton

Director, Independent Evaluation and Audit Services

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Almost all actors, from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), recognize that humanitarian action (HA) is more effective when it sufficiently accounts for the needs of women and girls and when gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) are integral to all aspects of the humanitarian programme cycle. UN Women is one of the most important actors in ensuring that this is achieved consistently and well.

UN Women's contribution to HA has been growing. UN Women's HA annual budget has grown by 700 per cent, from US\$ 3.4 million in 2011 to US\$ 27.2 million in 2017. The Entity has been involved in all aspects of HA, from small livelihood projects that give women critical income and promote their role in non-traditional sectors, to essential policy work in global forums like the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

While UN Women's growth and scope of programming is impressive, a more strategic and consistent approach is now required, with particular focus on:

- A detailed response-level strategy that provides specific approaches and standard operating procedures for engaging with and influencing coordination mechanisms, resource mobilization strategies within and beyond coordinated appeals, key partnerships/joint programming opportunities, and knowledge management and learning.
- Increasing effectiveness and impact in HA by better linking the Entity's work to system-wide responses while minimizing programming not carried out in partnership or that does not have broader strategic importance.
- A fit-for-purpose management and human resource structure for HA to ensure that UN Women can maximize its influence at the country level.

- A focus on developing global partnership frameworks with OCHA, UNHCR and UNFPA.

Action on these and other findings and conclusions from this evaluation will enable UN Women to strengthen its contribution to HA, from emergency response to longer-term transformative change.

1.1

Evaluation description and methodology

This corporate thematic evaluation assesses UN Women's contribution to HA at global, regional and country levels and seeks to inform strategic policy, decision-making, organizational learning and accountability, and contribute knowledge to what works and what doesn't to advance GEWE in HA. The evaluation also assesses UN Women's efforts to promote GEWE in the context of the New Way of Working (NWOW), UN reform, the 2030 Agenda for Humanity, UN Common Guidance on Resilience and the commitment to leave no one behind.

The primary audiences for this evaluation include UN Women's Executive Board, senior management, staff of the Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response Office (HACRO), and regional and country level staff working on GEWE in HA. The evaluation's scope is from 2014 to present, with a brief review of work conducted from 2011 to 2013.

The evaluation focused on issues and examples that inform how and when UN Women plays a significant role in HA. It includes linkages between the Entity's three organizational levels (global, regional and country) and the three dimensions of UN Women's mandate (normative, coordination and operational).

The evaluation included **five country missions** (Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, Jordan and South Sudan) as well as separate missions to New York and Geneva. The evaluation team met with UN Women staff, all relevant humanitarian actors, donors, governments, civil society, affected populations and women's groups. This resulted in a total of **461 semi-structured interviews and group discussions**.

The evaluation included a **survey** with 221 responses (a 33 per cent response rate), a **self-assessment** questionnaire completed by all six of UN Women’s regional humanitarian advisers, and an extensive **portfolio review** involving document review and analysis of **financial and results data for 39 countries**. The portfolio review included UN Women’s activities, partnerships and investment in HA from 2014 to 2018, with financial analysis from 2016 to 2018.

Prior to this report, the evaluation used the evidence and related analysis from four comprehensive case studies on **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Resilience the humanitarian response and chronic humanitarian situations** resulting from conflict and forced migration, UN Women’s **partnerships with key UN agencies**¹ in HA, and UN Women’s efforts to promote gender equality in HA through its **normative and coordination work at headquarters level**.

1.2

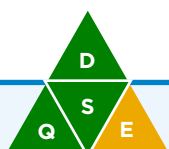
Conclusions

The following conclusions are organized by criteria. This includes the “triangulation marker” that indicates the type and strength of different evidentiary sources (see Section 2.8).

1.2.1. Relevance

CONCLUSION 1

UN Women helps to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women remains central to humanitarian action.



GEWE is largely recognized as an important factor in achieving effective HA. Most stakeholders consulted in this evaluation noted UN Women’s normative, coordination and programming work as relevant to HA. Stakeholders recognized how GEWE contributes to more sustained humanitarian outcomes and longer-term transformative change. However, the relationship between UN Women’s normative, coordination and programming work and the wider role that the Entity

¹ Key UN agency partnerships as identified in the 2014–2017 Humanitarian Action Plan, i.e. the key UN agencies working on humanitarian action.

plays in HA was not always clear. Therefore, some stakeholders see smaller-scale, country-level programming as the entirety of UN Women’s contribution to a specific response – missing how UN Women also informs important coordination and normative work.

1.2.2. Appropriateness

CONCLUSION 2

Stronger links are needed between UN Women’s global normative work and humanitarian coordination mechanisms where needs and priorities are determined.

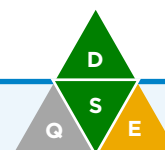


Over the last five years, UN Women has been involved in, and often instrumental to, all major international and regional forums concerning HA and DRR. This engagement has provided a foundation for making links with response-specific coordination mechanisms that define the needs of women and girls and other vulnerable groups. Such coordination mechanisms include the Humanitarian Needs Overview/ Humanitarian Response Plan processes, United Nations Humanitarian Country Teams, humanitarian clusters and sectors and inter-cluster working groups. However, a consistent, early and strategic presence in country-level coordination mechanisms is needed to make the vital links between UN Women’s global normative work and effective HA to ensure the needs of women and girls are appropriately addressed in humanitarian contexts.

1.2.3. Connectedness and sustainability

CONCLUSION 3

UN Women should continue to build on its “development” work while increasing its focus on the “humanitarian” side of the nexus.

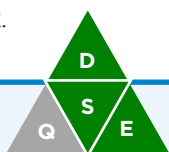


UN Women’s global normative work has provided a foundation for activities that are closer to the development side of the humanitarian–development nexus. This could lead humanitarian stakeholders to view UN Women solely as a development actor, thus

decreasing the Entity’s opportunities to influence humanitarian and other actors in their work to support women and girls in emergencies, and as they integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women into their programmes. UN Women could have a greater impact by ensuring that: a system-wide response is gender sensitive from the beginning; the Entity addresses underlying power dynamics; programming considers possible risks and backlash to women’s participation; and barriers to access are addressed. These actions are all closer to the humanitarian side of the nexus and also facilitate links to UN Women’s global normative work.

CONCLUSION 4

Working in partnership can ensure that UN Women makes sufficient contributions and increases funding opportunities.

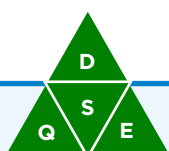


United Nations organizations are generally enthusiastic about engaging with UN Women, which has emerged from the partnerships that UN Women has forged to date. However, in the future, partnerships could be more central to how UN Women works in terms of specific responses. Partnerships with OCHA, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, among others, could enable UN Women to contribute to developing effective GEWE approaches, while creating a channel for these to be implemented at scale. This is important as UN Women’s programming currently tends to be at a smaller scale, meaning its efficacy and relevance is difficult to appraise. Working in partnership and at scale would be an effective way to demonstrate results, inform global policy and increase the inclination and capacity of donors to fund similar approaches and partnerships in other humanitarian responses.

1.2.4. Effectiveness

CONCLUSION 5

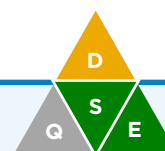
There is significant evidence that UN Women has been highly effective in its global normative work.



There are several examples of how UN Women has worked to integrate GEWE into frameworks and policies that guide HA. The evaluation could not identify any relevant international forum or event in which UN Women was absent over the last five years. The examples provided throughout the evaluation indicated that UN Women was not merely present, but also ensured that issues of GEWE were incorporated into key normative frameworks and guidance.

CONCLUSION 6

Lessons from UN Women’s country level work should serve to improve programming approaches globally and act as a catalyst for longer-term transformative change.

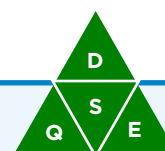


UN Women lacks systematic methods to effectively extract and document learning from specific humanitarian responses. While this is typical of many international organizations, it is of particular importance for UN Women as it supports programming that addresses immediate needs, pathways to recovery and longer-term transformative change. A systematic and consistent approach to appraise and extract lessons on how different actors incorporate a gender lens into humanitarian activities – either independently or because of direct UN Women support – would not only continue to build the case for investment in GEWE, but would also provide a compendium of best and emerging practices that could be replicated and brought to scale in other responses.

1.2.5. Efficiency


CONCLUSION 7

UN Women’s reliance on non-core resources tends to make it more reactive and less strategic, and thus less efficient overall.



With non-core resources comprising around 95 per cent of UN Women’s humanitarian funding,

the Entity is mostly “supply driven”. This means that UN Women is largely reliant on project-level funding and opportunities, which affects its ability to be more coherent and strategic at the global level.

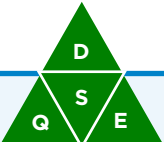


CONCLUSION 8

UN Women’s capacity and expertise in humanitarian action vary across offices, risking UN Women’s ability to deliver consistently.

As seen from other organizations’ experiences, becoming established as a reliable humanitarian actor requires commitment in terms of sufficient humanitarian capacity across the organization. Current corporate systems do not facilitate UN Women’s understanding of what type of humanitarian-related expertise it has available and where it can be found. A team of dedicated staff that could be deployed in the earliest stages of a response would help to ensure the implementation of a strategic and consistent humanitarian approach. Ideally, this team would include three to seven staff members with experience from multiple humanitarian responses who have a deep understanding of humanitarian coordination and appeal mechanisms.

1.2.6. Gender equality and human rights



CONCLUSION 9

UN Women’s work exemplifies gender equality and human rights approaches.

Overall, UN Women’s approach to HA demonstrates an understanding of how dynamics in a crisis affect women and girls by increasing their vulnerability and impacting their resilience, which ultimately undermines their ability to benefit from HA.

1.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the evaluation’s findings and conclusions.



RECOMMENDATION 1

UN Women should develop a response-level strategy to complement its global Humanitarian Strategy.

A response-level strategy should provide specific approaches and standard operating procedures for engaging with and influencing: coordination mechanisms (Humanitarian Country Teams, Humanitarian Needs Overview/Humanitarian Response Plans); resource mobilization strategies within and beyond coordinated appeals; key partnerships/joint programming opportunities; and approaches to ensure knowledge management and learning.

UN Women should establish criteria to define its field-level engagement, considering the level of need, capacity and inter-agency agreement. UN Women’s most important contribution to HA could be in helping operationalize guidance and bridging policy and practice. UN Women could also better track financing and results in programmes that specifically target women and girls to strengthen accountability.

To be a credible actor, UN Women needs to be predictable to better serve women and girls in humanitarian settings. This requires UN Women to commit to what it will do in crises (what, when and how). The decision on what to prioritize should be informed by humanitarian needs, UN Women’s comparative advantages and gaps in the system-wide response.

Recommendation 1.1: UN Women should review its Humanitarian Strategy and develop a complementary and detailed resource mobilization

strategy to leverage opportunities at the country level (Humanitarian Needs Overview/Humanitarian Response Plans) and with key donors.

UN Women may need to revise its HACRO Humanitarian Strategy based on a revised theory of change and develop a resource mobilization strategy that is consistent with these priorities and effective HA.

Recommendation 1.2: UN Women should conduct internal annual reviews of gender in humanitarian action and/or gender equality and the empowerment of women in humanitarian action to analyse how strategies are contributing to demonstrable results.

This could include assessing changes in coordination; the adoption and use of proven approaches and models; and strengthening leadership, accountability and technical capacity in relation to GEWE.

RECOMMENDATION 2

UN Women should identify the necessary leadership, minimum levels of staffing and office structures in humanitarian settings for an adequate response-level strategy in humanitarian action to ensure that the Entity can maximize its influence at the country level.

UN Women's humanitarian capacity should be central to relevant parts of the Entity's management and administration systems. This would include expanding and strengthening training on humanitarian principles, gender in humanitarian action, humanitarian coordination, the humanitarian programme cycle, accountability to affected populations, communications with communities, monitoring, evaluation and learning, and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse. Management and humanitarian staff would benefit from guidance on how to engage with humanitarian donors and strategic partners.

RECOMMENDATION 3

UN Women has developed important partnerships in different contexts and should build on this experience and focus on developing global partnership frameworks with OCHA, UNHCR and UNFPA.

UN Women should prioritize global partnerships with OCHA and UNHCR which could help to define a core package of services that UN Women could commit to delivering in (predefined) humanitarian contexts. Given their coordination roles, OCHA and UNHCR could then promote this "package" in other responses.

UN Women should continue to clarify and expand its partnership with UNFPA, recognizing each agency's contribution and how they build on and support each other in emergency contexts. This should go beyond agreements related to gender-based violence (GBV) referrals, psychosocial support and prevention of GBV, as currently agreed. A memorandum of understanding should be signed between both organizations and guidance should be developed to clearly outline roles and responsibilities of both agencies and in all contexts. A joint team of focal points could be established to travel to selected countries, clarify issues and work collaboratively.

An enhanced partnership with UNICEF could also be considered as there are some understandable overlaps between the two organizations. UN Women should work towards an agreement that illustrates how UN Women and UNICEF complement each other in different humanitarian contexts. This agreement should also provide details of how each organization would lead on issues affecting women and girls.

Recommendation 3 requires that UN Women and corresponding partners such as OCHA, UNHCR and UNFPA mutually engage at the highest level to secure the necessary commitments and sufficient specificity as to what, how and when they will collaborate to guide implementation on the ground.

 **RECOMMENDATION 4**

UN Women should increase its effectiveness and impact in humanitarian action by better linking the Entity's work to system-wide responses, while minimizing programming that is not conducted in partnership or that does not have broader strategic importance.

Due to its limited size and scale, UN Women should seek to increase its reach by better linking to system-wide responses, for example, rolling out the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Accountability Framework on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Humanitarian Action; integrating gender-responsive programming throughout the humanitarian programme cycle; and promoting women and girls' participation from the initial assessment stage to management, implementation and assessment. From this, UN Women can promote accountability and learning and further focus on enabling outcome-centred response planning and improved Humanitarian Needs Overview/ Humanitarian Response Plan processes.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1

Context

In 2018, more than 134 million people were in need of HA, and US\$ 25 billion in funding was required to respond to these needs. The need for HA is rising and crises are becoming more protracted and increasingly complex. Almost a quarter of the world's population lives in places affected by protracted crises and conflicts.² Conflicts are becoming more intractable and increasingly regionalized. Historical responses that included a sudden acute disaster with a relatively swift recovery period no longer apply to the majority of current crises, which are more often marked by relapses and difficult, complex paths to recovery.

Effective HA ensures that women and girls' needs are at the forefront of any response and that they can provide meaningful leadership in decision-making.³ Two decades ago, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) recognized that gender-sensitive HA could mitigate the adverse effects of emergencies and disasters for affected populations and could have a greater impact for positive change in gender roles.⁴ The resulting IASC Policy Statement on Gender Equality established responsibilities for the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and defined specific actions actors should take

to ensure that gender equality is integrated into all aspects of humanitarian response and inter-agency efforts.⁵ It called on humanitarian actors to strengthen the ways they promote and protect the human rights of women, girls, boys and men. This, and related efforts, have resulted in the development of gender equality strategies across UN agencies, NGOs and donors.

A similar focus evolved in relation to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA),⁶ the first global plan for DRR, emphasized the importance of gender integration into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management, and education and training.

While these international policy developments are positive, a great deal of inconsistency remains in how humanitarian actors address issues of GEWE during a response.⁷ Although GEWE emerged as an overarching theme in the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), women's representation in decision-making and leadership roles remains low.⁸

2 FAO. "Protracted Crises and Conflicts." <http://www.fao.org/in-action/kore/protracted-crisis-and-conflicts>

3 IASC (2017). "IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action." Page 20. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2018-iasc_gender_handbook_for_humanitarian_action_eng_0.pdf

4 The IASC committed to formulating strategies to ensure that gender issues are brought into the mainstream; ensuring data is disaggregated by sex and age and that a gender perspective is included in analysis; developing capacity for systematic gender mainstreaming in programmes, policies, actions and training; and ensuring reporting and accountability mechanisms for activities and results in gender mainstreaming within the UN and its partners, such as incentives, performance evaluations, budget allocation analysis and actions for redressing staff imbalance.

5 IASC (1999). "IASC Policy Statement for the Integration of a Gender Perspective in Humanitarian Assistance." <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/gender-and-humanitarian-action-0/documents-public/iasc-policy-statement-integration-gender>

6 UNISDR (2015) "Hyogo Framework for Action." <https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa>

7 See for example: CARE International (2018). "Policy Discussion Paper - Ways forward on Gender and Women's Participation in Humanitarian Action." https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CARE_Gender-Humanitarian-Policy-Discussion-Paper_Nov-2018.pdf.

8 UN Women. "UN Women, Humanitarian Action, Crisis Response and Recovery." <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/humanitarian-action/emergency-response>.

Funding for specific programmes that address the needs of girls and women is also limited.⁹ Therefore, while there is widespread agreement about the importance of GEWE and the needs and specific vulnerabilities of girls and women, the humanitarian system has not evolved to a point where these policies effectively guide all aspects of operations during a response.

2.2 UN Women's work in humanitarian action (HA)

UN Women's mission statement includes a focus on HA. As set out in the Secretary-General's report on A Comprehensive Proposal for the New Entity, UN Women is expected to work towards the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, HA, and peace and security.¹⁰

In response, as a new organization, UN Women has had to develop an approach to HA that matched its broader mandate, especially related to the transformative change associated with GEWE, and the acute needs of girls and women in increasingly complicated and protracted situations. In 2011, UN Women did not have a definitive strategy or programme for HA and its humanitarian portfolio consisted of four countries with a total budget of US\$ 3.4 million.

By 2014, UN Women's engagement in HA was established to "ensure consistency and sustainability in addressing gender equality concerns across the humanitarian–development continuum as well as to improve awareness and commitment, enhance capacity and strengthen partnerships with national entities, civil society, regional institutions and the international humanitarian system... [UN Women's] role was to support coordination and

9 According to the OECD report, Aid to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, An Overview, the amount of funding dedicated to gender equality programming amounted to USD 4.6 billion per year in 2015–2016, representing only 4 per cent of DAC members' total bilateral allocable aid. OECD (2018). "Aid to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: An Overview." Page 3. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/Aid-to-gender-overview-2018.pdf>

10 United Nations (2010). "General Assembly Resolution." A/RES/64/289. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/wps-a-res-64-289.php>

accountability efforts of humanitarian providers to ensure responses meet women's needs in humanitarian emergencies."¹¹

In 2017, UN Women's Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response Office (HACRO) was established as a separate office under the Policy and Programme Directorate, in recognition of the expanding humanitarian portfolio, replacing the Humanitarian Unit established in 2014.

Between 2011 and 2017, the HA portfolio grew by 700 per cent from US\$ 3.4 million to US\$ 27.2 million, and from 4 to 43 countries.¹² This growth has accelerated in the last few years: from 2016 to 2018 UN Women's humanitarian budget increased by US\$ 2,873,653 (a 14 per cent increase). In 2018, UN Women funded humanitarian activities in 27 per cent of the countries in which it has a presence (25 countries in total).¹³ This growth was achieved almost entirely through non-core resources, related to direct contributions for specific activities. Between 2016 and 2018, 94–96 per cent of UN Women's HA portfolio came from non-core resources.

The figures in Table 1 are based on the UN Women Development Results Framework database on HA which includes indicative figures (not certified figures) available in the UN Women results management system (RMS). It does not include any resources allocated to headquarters units or organizational effectiveness and efficiency outputs.

11 UN Women (2014). "Humanitarian Strategy 2014–2017." Page 4. <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/what%20we%20do/unwomen-humanitarianstrategy-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3341>

12 These figures are taken from the Terms of Reference for the Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to Humanitarian Action. Preliminary analysis during the inception phase highlighted the issue of consistency in reporting of financial data in relation to humanitarian action by COs, and a lack of comparable financial data in the period 2011–2014. This is echoed in the UN Women Humanitarian Programmes Review 2014, which identified US\$3,127,939 of humanitarian funding reported by three COs, with a further US\$3.5 million for Mali that was reported as covering a four-year window and therefore unable to be attributed to a specific period. UN Women (2018) "Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to Humanitarian Action." Page 2.

13 Humanitarian action budget in 25 of the 90 countries where UN Women is present, according to UN Women's 2017–18 Annual Report. UN Women (2018). "Annual Report 2017–2018."

TABLE 1**Comparison of core and non-core resources available for humanitarian action**

Year	DRF (core)	DRF (non-core available)	Total	Non-core/sum of core and non-core (%)
2018	\$ 951,133.00	\$ 15,741,293.00	\$ 16,692,424.00	94%
2017	\$ 726,432.00	\$ 19,768,202.00	\$ 20,494,634.00	96%
2016	\$ 892,984.00	\$ 17,948,201.81	\$ 18,841,187.81	95%

While this growth is significant, the reliance on non-core resources and with the resources available for HA, the Entity remains a smaller actor in this area. For instance, WFP's budget for 2016 was US\$ 4.4 billion, UNHCR had US\$ 3.9 billion and UNICEF US\$ 1.6 billion. While this is understandable given the time period and growth, it suggests there is limited clarity of UN Women's role in HA, how and if the Entity can provide direct services, partner with other organizations, and/or support individual actors and the system as a whole as it strives to integrate GEWE in all aspects of HA.

In addition, UN Women's approach to HA goes beyond direct response and towards the transformative benefits of GEWE. By 2018, UN Women's contributions to HA included crisis prevention, preparedness and responses to reduce vulnerabilities, address risks, promote resilience and leverage women's leadership across the humanitarian-development nexus. Contributions included normative work to assist Member States and the United Nations in developing and implementing policies; coordination across the UN system and the humanitarian community, including during humanitarian responses; and through various levels of programming during responses. This "tripartite approach" is central to UN Women's work and yet makes its efforts more complex than many traditional humanitarian actors.¹⁴

UN Women's normative efforts focus on ensuring that gender responsiveness is incorporated into relevant frameworks, policies and other international instruments. This work has been extensive. UN Women co-chairs and has served as the Secretariat of the Gender Reference Group in Humanitarian Action (GRG) under IASC since 2013. In this role, UN Women and the GRG undertook a review of IASC delivery on its 2008 Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action Policy

14 UN Women (2017). "Strategic Plan 2018-2021." UNW/2017/6/Rev.1. Page 10.

Statement in 2015, which noted inconsistencies in the application and prioritization of commitments.¹⁵ In 2017, UN Women set out to develop a new IASC Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action Policy, which reflected major developments in humanitarian normative priorities. Based on the revised policy, the GRG developed a Gender Accountability Framework¹⁶ that captures, monitors and measures the performance of IASC bodies in undertaking their roles and responsibilities as set out in the policy. In April 2018, with funding from European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the GRG launched the revised IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action to provide guidance to frontline humanitarian workers on integrating GEWE throughout the humanitarian programme cycle.¹⁷

UN Women was an important contributor to the 2016 WHS and resulting "Grand Bargain."¹⁸ UN Women co-convened a high-level roundtable on "Women and Girls: Catalysing Action to Achieve Gender Equality," that resulted in five core commitments related to GEWE:

15 Fawzi El-Solh, C. (2015). "Review of IASC 2008 Policy Statement on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action." UN Women/ IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action. Page 11. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2_review_iasc_gender_policy_final_report_narrative_report2_1.pdf

16 IASC (2017). "Accountability Framework for the IASC Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Action, 2018-2022." https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/iasc_accountability_framework_with_adjusted_self_assessment_0.pdf.

17 IASC (2018). "IASC Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action." <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/gender-and-humanitarian-action>.

18 UN Women website. "Global Norms and Standards: Humanitarian Action, World Humanitarian Summit and Grand Bargain." <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/humanitarian-action/global-norms-and-standards>.

- (i) Empowerment of women and girls as change agents and leaders.
- (ii) Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.
- (iii) Implementation of a coordinated global approach to prevent and respond to GBV in crisis contexts, including through the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies.
- (iv) Increased funding for gender-responsive humanitarian programming.
- (v) Full compliance with humanitarian policies, frameworks and legally binding documents related to gender.

UN Women’s operational work on HA and crisis response is implemented through two Flagship Initiatives: Women’s Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) and Gender Inequality of Risk and Promoting Community Resilience to Natural Hazards in a Changing Climate (GIR). GIR only represents a small part of UN Women’s DRR portfolio as the GIR has not been funded except for a pilot in the Solomon Islands. Under crisis response, UN Women works in complex humanitarian contexts with the overall goal of restoring dignity and promoting the resilience of female-headed households and women in vulnerable households, as well as providing sustainable solutions for refugees. This includes the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF), a flexible global pooled funding mechanism to increase financing for women’s participation, leadership and empowerment in both HA and peace and security settings. It which provides direct support to the capacity of local women to respond to crises and emergencies.¹⁹

Under crisis prevention, preparedness and DRR, UN Women partners with UNISDR and IFRC to address the disproportional effects and impacts of climate-related disasters on women and girls. This programme focuses on addressing the gender inequality of risk and promotes community resilience. It aims to make GEWE central for coordinated, effective HA and crisis response, focusing on increasing individual and collective resilience through work on the humanitarian–peace–development nexus.

¹⁹ The Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) (2019). “Operations Manual.” <http://wphfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/WPHF-Operations-Manual-May-2019-1.pdf>

2.3 UN reform and a new way of working for humanitarian action (HA)

The adoption of General Assembly resolution 72/279 on 31 May 2018 launched one of the most comprehensive transformations of the UN Development System (UNDS) and included seven key areas for transformation.²⁰

The gap between normative commitments and action in GEWE was recognized by the UN Secretary-General and the 2030 “Agenda for Humanity” through:

- (i) A strong focus on addressing those left furthest behind.
- (ii) A call for accountability across the UN system at country, regional and global levels for collective outcomes.
- (iii) A focus on implementation of norms and standards, data collection and analysis.²¹

The WHS set the stage for the 2030 Agenda for Humanity by establishing the five core responsibilities that are needed to address and reduce humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability, and the 24 key transformations that will help to achieve this. The WHS confirmed

²⁰ UN General Assembly Resolution 72/279 on 31 May 2018. The seven key areas of transformation include: 1) Context appropriate, demand-driven, skilled UN Country Teams (UNCTs); 2) A reinvigorated Resident Coordinator (RC) system with stronger capacity, leadership, accountability and impartiality; 3) A coordinated, reprofiled and restructured regional approach better supporting work on the ground; 4) Renewed spaces for Member States to guide system-wide actions and ensure greater coherence, transparency and accountability for results, supported by independent system-wide evaluations; 5) A stronger UN institutional response and system-wide approach to partnerships for the 2030 Agenda; 6) A Funding Compact to bring better quality, quantity and predictability of resources; and 7) Concrete steps to accelerate the system’s alignment to the 2030 Agenda. UN General Assembly (2018). “General Assembly Resolution A/RES/72/279” on the repositioning of the United Nations development system. https://un.org/me/UNDS_repositioning/20180604_Annex%202-%20Summary%20of%20key%20mandates%20Resolution%20UNDS%20repositioning%204%20June%202018.pdf

²¹ UNSG (2018). “Repositioning the United Nations Development System to Deliver on the 2030 Agenda: Our Promise for Dignity, Prosperity and Peace on a Healthy Planet.” Report of the Secretary General. Pages 9, 10. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1473546>

that “gender equality, the fulfilment of women and girls’ human rights and their empowerment in political, humanitarian, and development spheres is a universal responsibility...they are pivotal to sustaining conflict prevention and resolution, peacebuilding and building resilient communities.”²² The WHS provided a platform for commitments in support of GEWE and a further opportunity for tracking progress in this area.²³

The New Way of Working (NWOW) was also established to ensure progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Humanity. It entails working over many years, based on the comparative advantage of a diverse range of actors, including those outside the UN system, towards collective outcomes and, wherever possible, strengthening capacities that exist at national and local levels.

For UN Women’s work, NWOW presents an opportunity to provide guidance on how to track progress on gender commitments.²⁴ Recent studies advocate a holistic response to the “leave no one behind” pledge that considers the severity and overlaps between different types of deprivation and disadvantages. Intersectionality of vulnerability should be taken into account to understand who and why people face multiple compounding and/or severe disadvantages by assessing the disparities and shortfalls in achievements across geographic contexts and between people and groups, e.g. men and women, persons with/without disabilities, linguistic minorities, and marginalized cultural and religious groups etc.²⁵

UN Women established an Interdivisional Task Force on Change Management (IDTF) in November 2018 to analyse the implications of UNDS repositioning for the Entity and to develop a plan to respond to the demands of the 2030 Agenda, the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN reform. The IDTF’s objectives include enhancing the connection between normative, coordination and operational work, and ensuring that structures better respond to the needs of in-country and regional responses. The IDTF will assess UN Women’s role in relation to the SDGs and UN reform. This will provide strategic considerations for UN Women’s Strategic Plan mid-term review (2018–2021).

2.4 Evaluation objectives, scope and audience

This corporate thematic evaluation assesses UN Women’s contribution to HA at global, regional and country levels, and the extent to which this contribution has been made in line with rights-based approaches and gender equality principles.

The evaluation will inform UN Women’s strategic decisions regarding its approach to HA and is expected to feed into UN Women’s efforts to promote GEWE in the context of NWOW, UN reform, the 2030 Agenda for Humanity, UN Common Guidance on Resilience and the commitment to leave no one behind.²⁶

The evaluation’s objectives were to:

- Assess the relevance/appropriateness of UN Women’s HA work across its tripartite mandate (normative, coordination, operational) in addressing local needs and priorities, and in increasing ownership and accountability for integrating gender into HA.
- Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of UN Women’s contributions in prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and resilience building.
- Assess the extent to which UN Women’s interventions are connected to longer-term and development efforts and support sustainable approaches to recovery and DRR.
- Analyse how the human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in HA areas of work.

22 UN General Assembly (2016). “Outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit.” Report to the Secretary-General; (A/71/353), Paragraph 28, Page 8. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A-71-353%20-%20SG%20Report%20on%20the%20Outcome%20of%20the%20WHS.pdf>.

23 ActionAid, Women’s Refugee Council and UN Women (2018). “Empower Women and Girls (Transformation 3D) and Gender as a Cross-Cutting Issue: Analytical Paper on WHS Self-Reporting on Agenda for Humanity Transformation 3D.” Page 1. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Analytical%20Paper_3D_Gender_Final_26%20July-1.pdf

24 This was pointed out in a recent report: UN Women (2017). “Self-Report for 2017 on World Humanitarian Summit Commitments and Initiatives.”

25 UNDP (2018). “What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind? A UNDP Discussion Paper and Framework for Implementation.” Page 19.

26 Included in both NWOW and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 193 UN Member States pledged to ensure “no one will be left behind” and to “endeavor to reach the furthest behind first.”

- Identify and validate innovations and an optimal set of services, as well as lessons learned and good practice examples in UN Women’s humanitarian work.
- Provide actionable recommendations to solidify UN Women’s niche in HA.

The evaluation’s scope was from 2014 to present, with a brief review of the work from 2011 to 2013.

2.5 Methodology

The evaluation is formative with a utilization-focused approach.²⁷ This includes issues and examples that may inform how and when UN Women plays a significant role in HA and linkages between its three organizational levels (global, regional and country) and the three dimensions of its mandate (normative, coordination and operational/programming).

FIGURE 1
Evaluation scope and criteria and OECD DAC/ALNAP and other evaluation levels

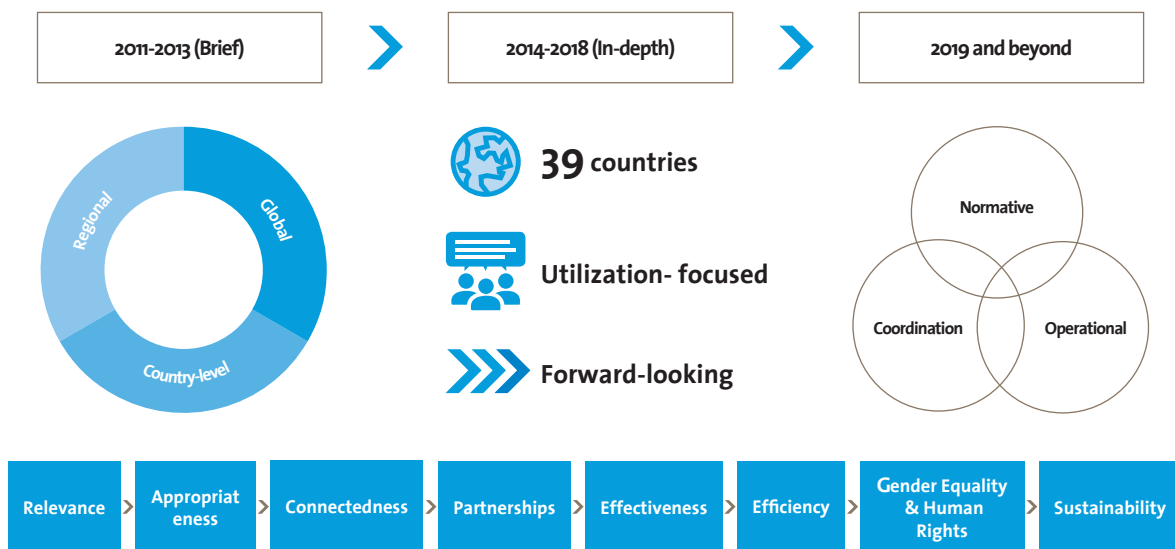
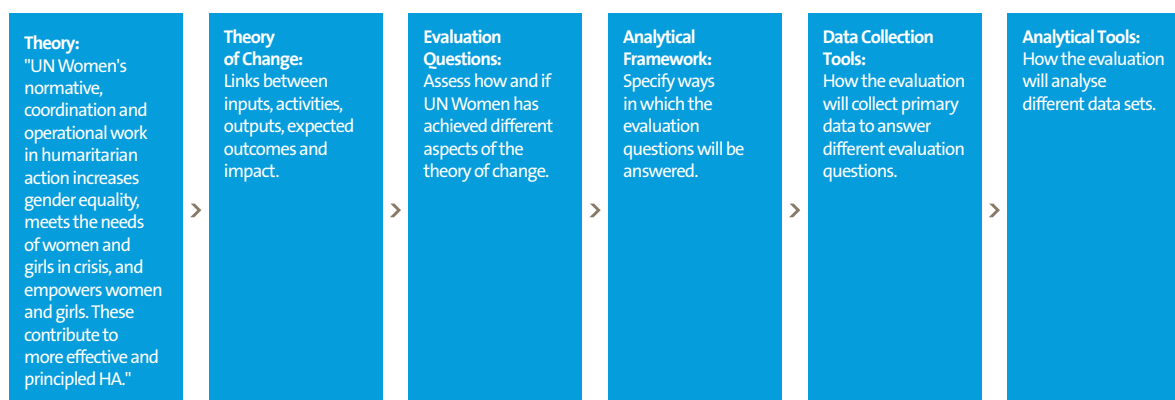


FIGURE 2:
Evaluation architecture



The evaluation’s audiences include UN Women’s Executive Board, senior management, HACRO and regional and country level staff working on GEWE in HA, among others. The evaluation will be presented to the Second Session of the Executive Board in 2019.

²⁷ Deriving from “Utilization-Focused Evaluation” developed by Michael Quinn Patton, an approach based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged on its usefulness to its intended users. https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/utilization_focused_evaluation

FIGURE 3:
Theory of change to guide the evaluation

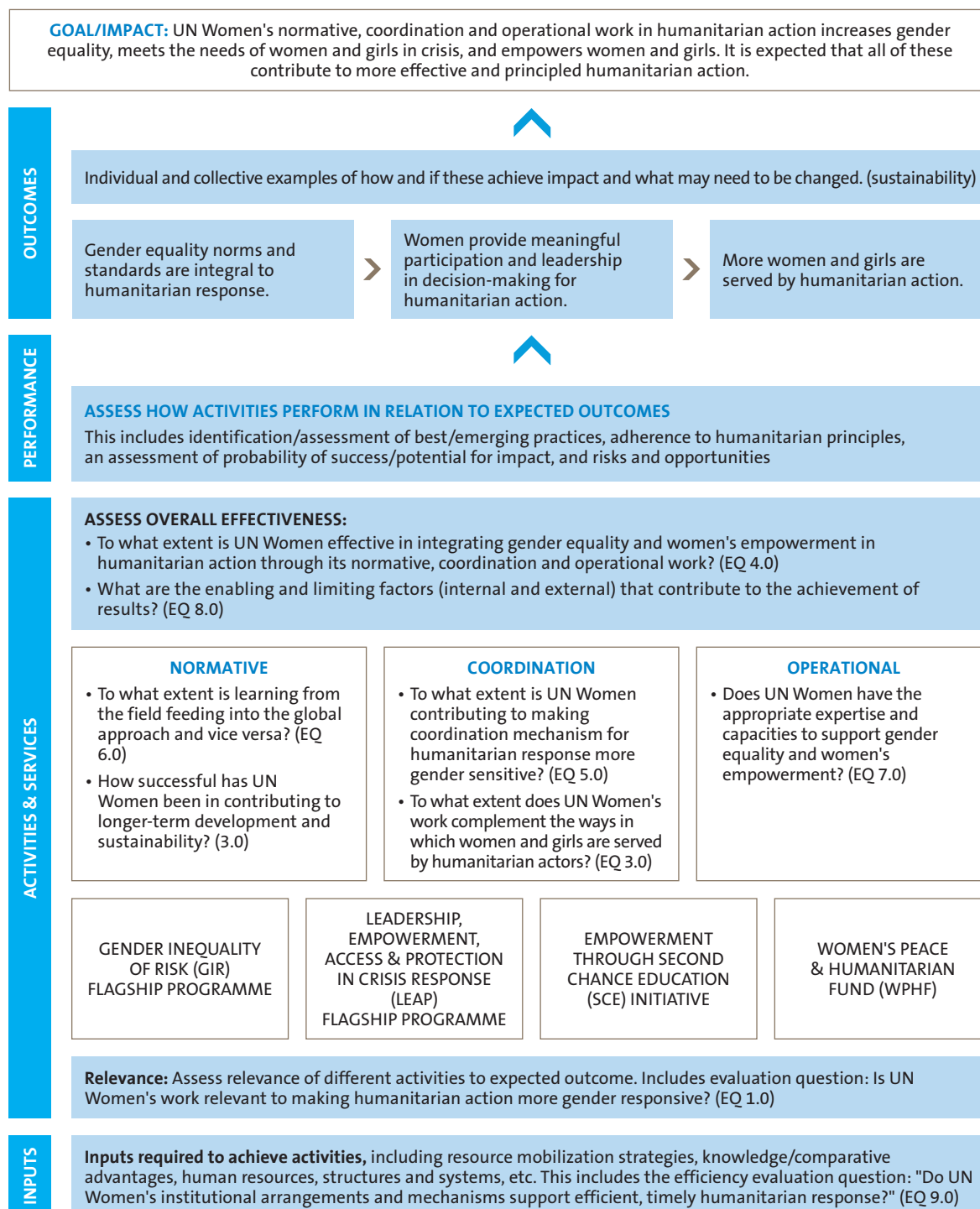
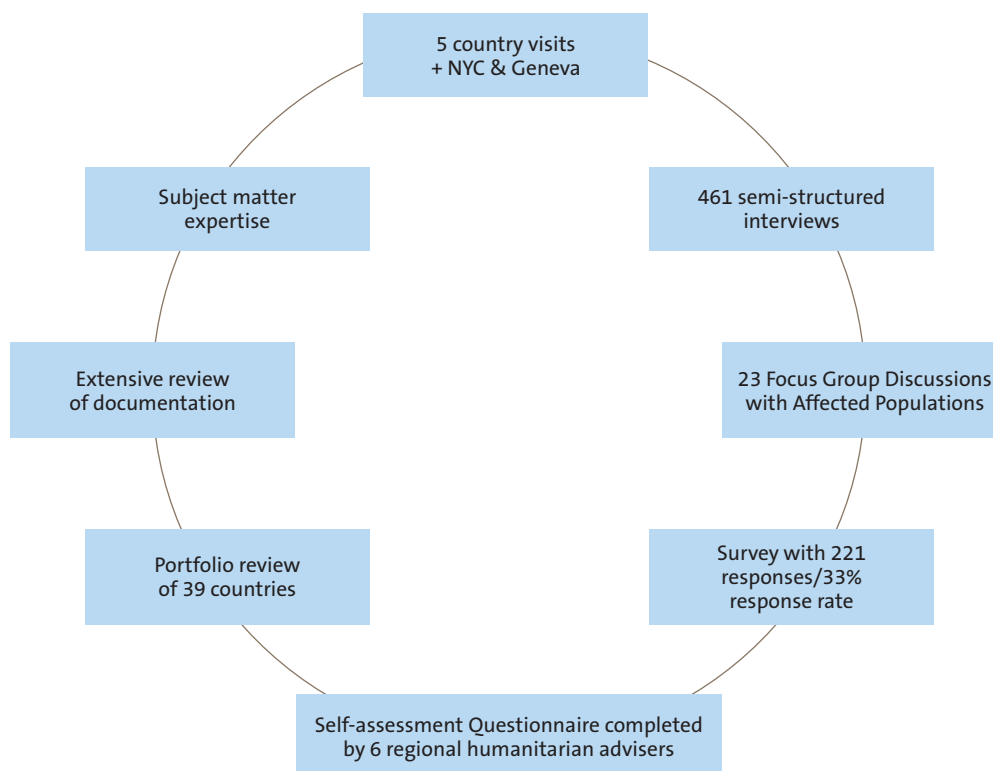


FIGURE 4:
Sources used in the evaluation



The evaluation assessed data and information from the estimated 39 countries where UN Women works (or has worked) on HA between 2014 and 2018.

The evaluation was based on a traditional sequence, starting with a theory and progressing to analysis.

As noted in the first box in Figure 2, the theory is twofold in that “UN Women’s normative, coordination and operational work in humanitarian action *increases* gender equality, meets the needs of women and girls in crisis, and empowers women and girls” and that this “*contributes to more effective and principled humanitarian action.*” In brief, the theory is the same as UN Women’s goal. The evaluation assessed how and to what extent the theory was true.

The primary framework for testing and assessing this was through a theory of change. The theory of change shows how different aspects of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and expected impact are related and what needs to be assessed to test the theory – mainly how and if different activities achieve stated outcomes and how they contribute to the expected goal/impact.

Based on this theory of change, the evaluation team formulated evaluation questions (see Annex 5). The analytical framework, data collection tools and analytical tools described in the Inception Phase Report established the ways in which these questions were answered. For more on the methodology, approach and tools please refer to the Inception Phase Report (Annex 2).

2.6 Sources

To assess the theory of change and answer the ensuing evaluation questions, the evaluation drew from a range of sources, including: a wide range of UN Women and other documents (see Annex 16); the expertise of the evaluation team itself; and a number of independent sources. This included qualitative data during the five field missions to Cameroon, Bangladesh, Colombia, South Sudan and Jordan, as well as the two missions to UN Women headquarters in New York (during both inception and data collection phases) and one mission to Geneva.

FIGURE 5:
Field missions and portfolio review



TABLE 2:
Demographic data of those interviewed for evaluation

Cohort	Total Participants	Female Participants	Male Participants
UN Women	79	55	24
UN agencies	117	68	49
NGOs	29	15	14
Civil society	12	9	3
Implementing partner	44	27	17
Government	39	18	21
Donor	23	16	7
Beneficiaries and affected populations	118	94	24
TOTALS:	461	302	159

These missions resulted in a total of 461 semi-structured interviews and group discussions.

A breakdown of the interviews by gender, cohort and interview type is provided in Table 2. During the five field missions, group discussions were held with affected populations and, in some cases, implementing partners. A total of 136 people participated in the focus group discussions.

The evaluation also included additional primary data sources:

- **Survey:** A survey was distributed to a total of 680 stakeholders, of which 221 responded (33 per cent response rate). A summary of the survey findings is provided in Annex 9.
- **Self-assessment questionnaire:** The questionnaire was completed by all six of UN Women’s regional humanitarian advisers. It included mostly open-ended questions, allowing respondents to provide their input on each topic. Responses were analysed for trends and common issues.

- **Portfolio review:** An assessment of UN Women’s humanitarian portfolio was undertaken, involving extensive document review and analysis of financial data for 39 countries. The portfolio review included UN Women activities, partnerships and investment in HA from 2014 to 2018, with financial analysis from 2016 to 2018, when such information was available. The results of the portfolio review are included in Annex 12.

2.7 Thematic case study country selection

Thematic case studies were conducted to inform key aspects of the evaluation’s analysis. These included:

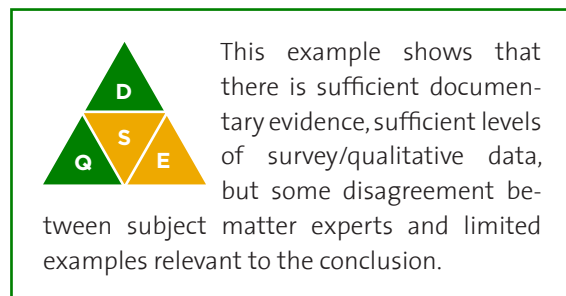
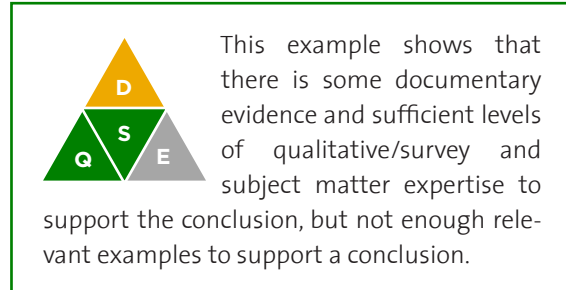
- **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Resilience.**
- **Humanitarian response and chronic humanitarian situations** resulting from conflict and forced migration.
- UN Women’s **partnerships with key UN agencies and INGOs**²⁸ in HA.
- UN Women’s efforts to promote gender equality in HA work through its **normative and coordination work at headquarters level.**

2.8 Data synthesis and triangulation

In developing conclusions, the extent of convergence between different sources was assessed. This included primary qualitative/survey data (Q) from the evaluation, documentary evidence (D), examples of UN Women’s work (E) and the subject matter expertise of the evaluation team (S). Each conclusion includes a graphic that shows the completeness of data/information for each area and thus the overall convergence between different evidentiary sources.

²⁸ Key UN agency partnerships as identified in the 2014–2017 Humanitarian Action Plan, i.e. the key UN agencies working on humanitarian action. UN Women (2013). “United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women Strategic Plan, 2014–2017.” Page 3.

This provides a shorthand of how and if all data sources were used. These are summarized as being either **Grey** (no data), **Amber** (some data), or **Green** (sufficient data) as below:



2.9 Ethics, gender equality and human rights

The evaluation adhered to OECD-DAC standards, ALNAP guidance, and UNEG norms and standards. The evaluation followed UN Women’s Evaluation Policy and UN Women’s Evaluation Handbook. It was conducted in full adherence with UNEG norms and standards²⁹ and UNEG agreed ethical guidelines³⁰ which seek to ensure overall credibility and responsible use of power and resources. In line with UN Women’s Evaluation Policy principles for a gender-responsive evaluation,³¹ the evaluation strived to identify innovation and to promote

²⁹ UNEG (2016). “Norms and Standards for Evaluations.” https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/UNEG%20Norms%20Standards%20for%20Evaluation_WEB.pdf.

³⁰ UNEG (2008). “Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.” <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>.

³¹ UN Women Independent Evaluation Office (2015) “How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluations: Evaluation Handbook.” <https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/en/evaluation-handbook>.

inclusion and a fair balance of power between all groups and individuals.

The evaluation included a gender-responsive approach,³² promoting accountability towards commitments of gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women in all aspects of the process. This has informed both what the evaluation has examined and the way in which the evaluation was conducted. The evaluation included a human rights-based approach that was informed by feminist theory.

2.10 Limitations

The evaluation encountered some limitations that account for how the evaluation analysed and treated different subjects.

UN Women's humanitarian work includes components more usually associated with development programming, limiting a precise delineation between humanitarian and development activities. UN Women's contributions to HA include activities across the humanitarian–development nexus. UN Women's work in the humanitarian–peace–development nexus also explains the challenge of drawing boundaries between different types of activities. This limited standard evaluative approaches that could assess an established set of activities against stated goals (outcome and impact). The evaluation team therefore chose to be exploratory and understand the narratives around UN Women's contribution to HA. This enabled an assessment of UN Women's activities and how they can contribute to UN Women's future HA work. At the same time, the evaluation provides analysis that could help to provide clearer definitions, linkages and a strategic approach for UN Women's future contributions to HA.

Relevant data prior to 2016 was limited.

Verifiable financial data could not be provided for the years 2011–2015. This financial data lacked sufficient detail to determine if activities were part of the humanitarian or peace and security portfolios. Nonetheless, this data is presented prima facie with explanations of its limitations.

While each field mission included site visits to UN Women supported activities, these were based on availability and logistics rather than sampling.

The evaluation did not have a comprehensive list of all such activities. This prevented a representative sample of activities and may have included a selection bias. Other analysis suggests the lack of a coherent strategic approach to UN Women supported programmes at the country level, therefore a representative sample may not have been relevant. The evaluation compared these activities with results from the evaluation's portfolio analysis and other sources to determine relevant trends.

Cohorts/respondents for semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were not representative

given that interviewees were sometimes based on last-minute availability and other scheduling issues at the country level. This prevented standard approaches to qualitative data trend analysis. Perspectives and comments from semi-structured interviews were assessed according to how they corresponded with or contradicted other sources, e.g. relevant documentation. This is indicated throughout the report when such evidence is cited.

³² This is a term of art for UN Women in relation to evaluations.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance

Is UN Women’s work relevant in making humanitarian action more gender-responsive?³³

FINDING 1:

Gender equality and women’s empowerment are essential for effective humanitarian action. Most stakeholders recognize that UN Women is a key actor providing clear, practical and evidence-based guidance for gender equality and women’s empowerment in humanitarian action and that the Entity ensures these issues are both integrated effectively and consistently in all humanitarian responses. UN Women’s normative work has proven to be particularly relevant to these efforts.

GEWE is repeatedly identified as critical for enabling efficient, effective and sustainable HA. This includes some of the most commonly cited policies and guidelines: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Recommendation 37 on gender-related dimensions of DRR in the context of climate change; IASC GEEWG Policy and Accountability Framework (2017); GiHA Handbook (2018); joint publication of Gender Responsive Disaster Recovery with the World Bank; Security Council Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security; Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies; and the creation of the Friends of Gender Group for the Grand Bargain.

³³ Relevance is concerned with assessing whether the project is in line with local needs and priorities (as well as donor policy). ALNAP, Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria, An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies, Page 22.

The IASC, the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of HA, issued the 2008 Policy Statement on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action which was designed to ensure that gender is adequately mainstreamed in humanitarian responses. The 2015 Review of IASC 2008 Policy Statement on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action cites UN Women’s role in this, with the Entity’s particular focus on “providing clear, practical and evidence-based normative standards (guidance) and using its coordination mandate and field presence to ensure it is incorporated in an effective, consistent, and practical manner.”³⁴

Donors are also pushing for GEWE to be essential in HA. For instance, SIDA’s Gender Tool Box states at the outset:

There is an increasing recognition amongst humanitarian actors of the urgency to ensure that the different needs of women, girls, men and boys are taken into account and included in all humanitarian assistance. Failure to do so hampers an effective humanitarian response and may put beneficiaries’ lives at risk.³⁵

³⁴ This is a key finding in the Review of IASC 2008 Policy Statement on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action, which conducted an in-depth desk review of documents issued by or on behalf of the IASC Leadership and found inconsistencies in the way the three key variables of the IASC 2008 Gender Policy – gender, age and diversity – are addressed and incorporated in directives, concept and position papers, and in reports of regular or ad hoc meetings issued by the various IASC Leadership groups. Source: Fawzi El-Solh, C. (2015) “Review of IASC 2008 Policy Statement on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action,” UN Women/ IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action. Page 11. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2._review_iasc_gender_policy_final_report_narrative_report2_1.pdf

³⁵ SIDA (2015). “Gender Equality in Humanitarian Assistance: Gender Tool Box.”

SIDA is not alone: nearly all donors have increased their focus on GEWE and are pushing for actors to do better.³⁶

The Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator stated recently: “We need to continue to invest in gender analysis. If humanitarians do not understand the gender dynamics, roles, and inequalities in a given context, they risk that their assistance is ineffective or even does harm.”³⁷ UN Women’s Chief of Humanitarian Action and Crisis Response Office (HACRO) has also described how women face “higher exposure to risk, which becomes even worse in humanitarian crisis situations. Still, only a quarter of response plans from 2017 included the gender dimension. Despite increased incorporation of gender considerations across humanitarian action, there is still a long way to go.”³⁸

Respondents to this evaluation largely confirmed the relevance of UN Women’s contributions to HA. Eighty-four per cent of non-UN Women respondents rated the Entity’s role in HA as either “significantly” or “completely” relevant to ensuring that HA is gender responsive (see Figure 6). In semi-structured interviews in the five field missions, respondents seldom questioned this relevance. The majority stated that UN Women’s role was not only relevant but “welcome” and “needed”.

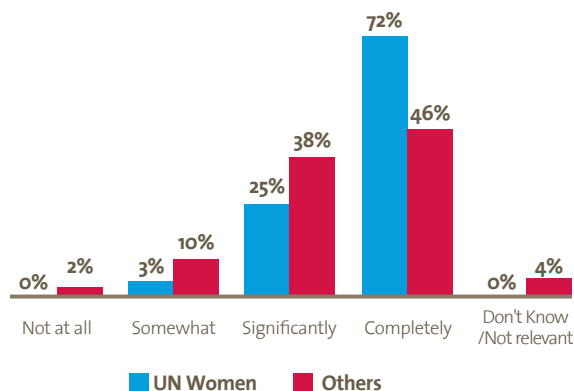
The most common statement regarding relevance, including from those charged with implementing gender approaches within their institutions, was the need for clear and pragmatic guidance on how to support GEWE in programmes and operations. Respondents expected

36 For more on how donors are acting to support gender equality, separate from broader humanitarian reform efforts, see: Uwe Andersen & Katharina Behmer; (2018). “The Governance of Humanitarian Action in World Politics.” In Heintze HJ., Thielbörger P. (eds); *International Humanitarian Action*. (2018) Springer.

37 Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ursula Mueller – Remarks at the Humanitarian Networking and Partnerships Week event: Moving Forward on Gender Equality and Women’s Participation, Page 2. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ASGMueller_HNPW_Gender_6Feb2019_Asdelivered.pdf

38 Norwegian Permanent Mission to UN and WTO/EFTA in Geneva (2018). “Gender Perspectives are Key in Humanitarian Response.” <https://www.norway.no/en/missions/wto-un/our-priorities/humanitarian-affairs/gender-perspectives-are-key-in-humanitarian-response/>

FIGURE 6:
Is UN Women’s role in humanitarian action relevant to ensuring humanitarian action is more gender responsive? (1.0)
(Survey Question)



UN Women to provide practical solutions to the operational dilemmas often faced in complex humanitarian contexts, either through its own experiment or through its partnership and normative work in various contexts. As an example, the IASC Gender Handbook was cited as useful, but that more was needed, e.g. specific and concrete examples of how to operationalize this guidance and integrate it into each sector. The UNICEF Regional Office in South Asia has developed a guidance document titled “Enhancing Gender in Humanitarian Response” that explains key gender issues for each sector and provides specific actions that can be taken by the sector to address these issues; and while not significantly different from the IASC Gender Handbook, it stands as an example of how guidance can be adapted by different actors.³⁹

In response, UN Women has developed a range of approaches to meet these needs (see Table 3), which are explored throughout the evaluation.

The evaluation’s portfolio review identified a number of other examples. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt), UN Women and OCHA have established ongoing training with gender focal points from all clusters on mainstreaming gender in the humanitarian programme cycle, as well as training-of-trainer sessions on the Gender and Age Marker (GAM) with gender focal points. According to the 2017 Country Portfolio

39 UNICEF South Asia Regional Office (2018). “Enhancing Gender in Humanitarian Response.” <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/2481/file/Enhancing%20Gender%20in%20Humanitarian%20Response.pdf>

TABLE 3:**UN Women’s approach to addressing identified gaps and needs**

Identified gap/need	UN Women’s approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender still not seen as a priority by all humanitarian actors - Gender not integrated into programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy (normative and coordination) - Programming in HA (pilots and Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action) - Technical assistance (gender focal points) - Capacity building and training to address gaps in gender-based approaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gaps in data - Gaps incorporating specific barriers and needs that affect women and girls in planning/programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PDNA (Nepal, Somalia, India) and gender alerts (IASC- Ebola, Nepal), situation analysis (i.e. Profile of Venezuelan migrant women) - Advocacy (coordination), research and capacity building
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited participation of women and girls in decision-making and solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with women’s organizations and women (e.g. mediators) - LEAP (empowerment) - Advocacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of targeted investment in women - Lack of accountability on gender by humanitarian actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy (e.g. UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund 30% target for projects/ results, Colombia) - Development of IASC Accountability Framework, oversight of gender equality for funding distribution (Iraq, Colombia)

Evaluation, these efforts helped to “achieve coordination around gender in humanitarian areas” and “the technical support and capacity strengthening by UN Women ... has allowed them to keep a stronger gender focus in design and programming.”⁴⁰ There are other examples in Nepal, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Myanmar.

In Myanmar, UN Women has recently published a Gender Profile for Humanitarian Action, developed in collaboration with stakeholders from the UN, INGOs, NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs).⁴¹ This Gender Profile details the current context in crisis settings in Rakhine, northern Shan and Kachin states, and the respective gender issues, needs and gaps. The Gender Profile identifies current and past efforts to address these issues by the humanitarian community and sets out practical goals and recommendations. This assessment was endorsed by the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group and incorporated an analysis of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, including older people, people with disabilities, children (especially unaccompanied or separated), adolescents,

female-headed households, single women, pregnant and lactating women, single parents, ethnic/religious minorities, and people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ).

3.2

Appropriateness

To what extent does UN Women tailor its approach to the needs of girls and women in country responses and global forums?⁴²

FINDING 2:

In relation to global forums, UN Women has made significant contributions to various policies, frameworks and initiatives. As regards to specific country responses, UN Women has not consistently tailored its country-level programming to the needs of women and girls. However, UN Women’s experience in both areas provides examples of how to tailor approaches to women and girls’ needs.

40 UN Women (2017). “Country Portfolio Evaluation: Palestine.” Page 27. <http://gate.unwomen.org/Evaluation/Details?EvaluationId=11217>.

41 UN Women (2019). “Gender Profile for Humanitarian Action and Across the Humanitarian-Peace-Development Nexus: Rakhine, Kachin and Northern Shan, Myanmar (as of 24th January 2019).” <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/02/gender-profile-for-humanitarian-action>.

42 Appropriateness is the tailoring of humanitarian activities to local needs, increasing ownership and accountability. See Buchanan-Smith M., Cosgrave J., & Warner A. (2016). *Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide*; ALNAP. Page 113.

TABLE 4:**UN Women’s presence in Humanitarian Response Plans from the evaluation’s portfolio review**

	2016	2017	2018
Number of countries with HRP appeals	41	37	27
Countries with HRP where UNW has presence	32	27	24
Countries with HRP where UNW has HA budget	18	18	17
Number of countries where UNW is included in the appeal	16	10	8
UNW total funds requested in appeals	\$36,342,314	\$17,863,074	\$27,984,559
Average size of UNW ask as % of total appeal	0.94 %	0.76%	0.74%
Number of appeals where UNW received funding	5	3	3
UNW total funds received from appeals	\$2,896,241	\$7,490,798	\$2,422,104
Percentage of UNW appeal funded	7.97%	41.93%	8.66%

Country-level response

The Humanitarian Programme Cycle, including the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), are the primary tools through which the context, needs and priorities of affected populations are determined and how different actors respond. This includes needs assessments and analysis, strategic response planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring, and operational reviews and evaluations.⁴³ This approach is based on IASC principles and expects to achieve:

- Stronger emphasis on the needs of affected people.
- Improved targeting of the most vulnerable.
- Increased funding for humanitarian priorities.
- Greater accountability of humanitarian actors and donors for collective results.⁴⁴

In 2018, UN Women was included in 8 of 27 HRPs⁴⁵ (see Table 4).

⁴³ See OCHA’s description of the humanitarian programme cycle, available at: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/programme-cycle/space>.

⁴⁴ IBID.

⁴⁵ This figure represents the number of countries covered by HRPs, not the total number of plans, i.e. the Syria 3RP includes five countries plus a regional appeal. The number of HRPs and amounts are calculated at country level for comparability with UN Women budgets.

Table 4 shows that the number of countries where UN Women is included in the appeal has declined. This is in real terms as well as a percentage of HRPs, with UN Women being included in 39 per cent of the 41 appeals in 2016 and 29 per cent in 2018. UN Women’s presence in HRP appeals has also declined, from 16 in 2016 to 8 in 2018.

As many respondents noted, the absence of UN Women from these standard coordination mechanisms can limit both the Entity’s capacity to influence actors and promote the best aspects of GEWE, but also implies that humanitarian actors simply don’t have exposure to UN Women and how the Entity can support a response. The HRPs and the broader Humanitarian Programme Cycle are the primary mechanisms where the “appropriateness” of a response is determined. As noted elsewhere, UN Women has supported international actors as they shape policies and guidelines that include GEWE and this, of course, contributes to how various humanitarian actors respond. Yet, UN Women’s mandate, especially its coordination and programming roles, suggests the need for a significant ‘in-country’ presence to provide, as the IASC states, “clear, practical and evidence-based normative standards (guidance) and to use its coordination mandate and field

TABLE 5:**UN Women direct beneficiaries as related to humanitarian action in 2018**

Country	Funding required (US\$) ¹	Total # of persons targeted by HRP ²	# UN Women direct beneficiaries ³	Women and girls	Men and boys	% of target population assisted
Yemen	3,108,067,800	13,100,000	3,836	3,836	0	0.026%
Lebanon (Syria 3RP)	2,291,098,474	2,505,000	2,185	2,150	35	0.087%
Turkey (Syria 3RP)	1,743,677,229	5,120,814	4,950	4,950	0	0.097%
South Sudan	1,717,890,485	6,000,000	4,500	3,000	1,500	0.075%
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1,675,200,000	10,500,000	392	392	0	0.004%
Somalia	1,542,514,570	5,400,000	0	0	0	0.000%
Ethiopia	1,177,218,620	7,880,000	1,000	500	500	0.013%
Nigeria	1,047,768,587	6,100,000	450	450	0	0.007%
Jordan (Syria 3RP)*	1,043,346,938	1,900,000	8,360	7,524	836	0.440%
Sudan	1,007,555,093	4,300,000	950	800	150	0.022%

* This is based on the Syria 3RP; not the Jordan Response Plan which entails a different process than those typical of HNO/HRP processes.

¹ OCHA (2018). "Global Humanitarian Overview." <https://interactive.unocha.org/publication/globalhumanitarianoverview/>

² IBID.

³ UN Women (2019). "HACRO Survey – Thematic Reporting Data."

presence to ensure GEWE is incorporated in an effective, consistent and practical manner."⁴⁶

In terms of direct support, UN Women's programming activities reach less than 1 per cent of populations targeted by HRPs in the 10 largest humanitarian responses in 2018 (see Table 5). UN Women is constrained by its reliance on non-core funding for the types of activities it leads. This can lead to an impression that these activities are "discrete," without tangential links to other activities in the country, to UN Women's global normative and coordination work, and to broader strategies and goals. In fact, many respondents described these activities as "pilots" and yet this could

⁴⁶ This was a key finding in the Review of IASC 2008 Policy Statement on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action, which conducted an in-depth desk review of documents issued by or on behalf of the IASC Leadership and found inconsistencies in the way the three key variables of the IASC 2008 Gender Policy – gender, age and diversity – are addressed and incorporated in directives, concept and position papers, and in reports of regular or ad hoc meetings issued by the various IASC Leadership groups. Source: Fawzi El-Solh, C. (2015). "Review of IASC 2008 Policy Statement on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action." https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2_review_iasc_gender_policy_final_report_narrative_report2_1.pdf.

reflect the limitations in quality that emerge and as not adequately capturing the immediate benefits and opportunities associated with these activities. However, these activities are benefiting many people, especially girls and women, and even if "small" in relation to broader responses, they have often resulted in links with new partners and activities further along the humanitarian–development nexus.

In 2018, UN Women funded HA activities in 27 per cent of the countries in which it has a presence (25 countries in total).⁴⁷ Fourteen countries, or 15 per cent, had HA budgets over US\$ 500,000.⁴⁸ This compares with 28 countries that had active HRPs with average appeal amounts of US\$ 963,273,184. Of the three countries with the largest HRP appeals in 2018 (Yemen, Lebanon and Turkey), UN Women's HA budgets accounted for 0.03 per cent of the appeal in Yemen, 0.06 per cent of

⁴⁷ Humanitarian action budget in 25 of the 90 countries where UN Women is present, according to UN Women's 2017–18 Annual Report.

⁴⁸ US\$500,000 is used as the figure by which there is a clear division among country budgets analysed as part of the portfolio review. This does not imply that countries with less than US\$500,000 are less effective.

TABLE 6:
Most common UN Women activities 2016–2018

Type of activity reported	# of countries		
	2016	2017	2018
Technical support	23	23	21
Capacity building (HA)	20	16	18
SGBV prevention & response	16	10	11
Livelihoods	13	11	11
Coordination	5	8	9
DRR*	12	11	14

* Note: DRR activities include response, preparedness, normative and capacity building.

the appeal in Lebanon, and 0.16 per cent of the appeal in Turkey.⁴⁹ This is not meant to imply that UN Women’s contributions, in comparison, were not significant. As noted elsewhere, UN Women has proven to be effective in different activities and, given its tripartite approach, in some cases programming informs and is informed by UN Women’s broader coordination and normative work.

However, these levels of contributions do signal that UN Women’s reliance on non-core funding and, at a very basic level, its activities at the country level are small in scale and this may limit its capacity to have broader influence on important coordination mechanisms (see Table 1 in Section 2.2). “Appropriateness” implies that humanitarian actors tailor their activities to local needs, increasing ownership and accountability, which is typically achieved through the HNO/HRP process. This could be based on the size of the response and people in need, as described in this section, or through an assessment of all humanitarian responses with targets where GEWE issues are not addressed adequately or where the needs of girls and women are particularly pronounced.

UN Women’s absence in HRPs does not imply that GEWE is not being addressed properly, either in the 8 HRPs where the Entity had a presence in 2018 or in the 19 where it did not. However, being part of the appeal, being a member of the HCT, and being involved in the clusters, could facilitate UN Women’s work with

humanitarian actors to ensure that the response is appropriate to the needs of girls and women.

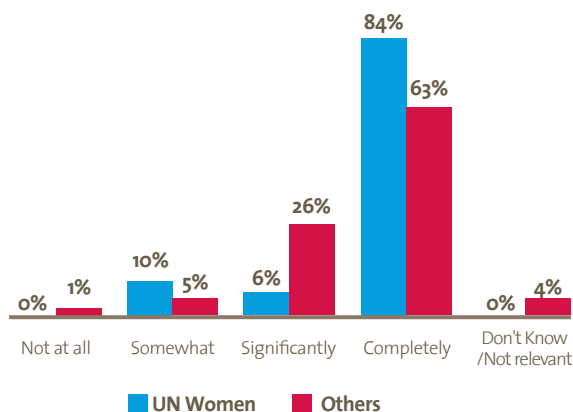
Since 2016, UN Women has focused on providing technical support and capacity building activities (see Table 6 for a list of common examples).

Based on a review of the type of work included as “technical support,” this tended to be work with government entities on policies, systems and approaches to HA in their respective countries. For instance, UN Women worked with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation in Jordan as they developed their national Humanitarian Response Plan, the Jordan Response Plan. In South Sudan, UN Women worked with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare to increase the participation of civil society groups in the post-emergency context.

“Capacity building” has tended to focus on government entities, civil society and INGOs in integrating GEWE into DRR policies and frameworks. In 2018 alone, UN Women Country Offices trained over 1,250 personnel in gender and HA. In Bangladesh, UN Women has worked with the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs, UNDP and UNOPS to create a National Resilience Programme that includes tools and frameworks to address the resilience of girls and women. These and other examples illustrate that most of UN Women’s technical assistance and capacity development work is more in alignment with the development side of the humanitarian–development nexus,

⁴⁹ This doesn’t include the JRP for the Rohingya Response in Bangladesh, which was US\$950.8 million. UN Women received US\$1.36 million under this JRP.

FIGURE 7:
Importance of providing gender expertise to field level humanitarian coordination mechanisms
 (Survey Question)



including with government entities and civil society and in regard to normative work that can and should influence the response, but has limited bearing on programming. This strengthens the “appropriateness” of other actors’ work in HA to integrate the gender equality perspective into the response.

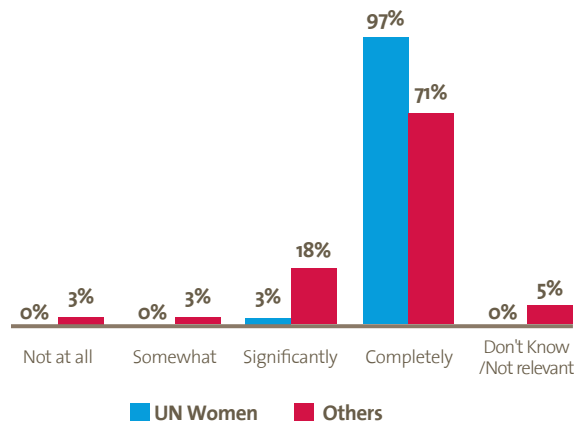
Global forums

In the UN Women Humanitarian Strategy (2014–2017), UN Women committed to supporting existing system-wide coordination efforts for gender-responsive HA at the global level through IASC, as well as at regional and national levels.

This strategy aligns with respondents’ views about how UN Women’s work supports the appropriateness of a response. Most respondents rated this as “completely” important. These ratings were even stronger when asked if UN Women should ensure that gender is integrated throughout all stages of humanitarian assessments, planning, implementation, and monitoring (see Figure 8). Similar trends exist for all areas assessed by the evaluation survey regarding UN Women’s role in HA.

Respondents both in the survey and semi-structured interviews cited examples of how UN Women’s participation in intergovernmental forums have

FIGURE 8:
Importance of ensuring that gender is integrated throughout all stages of humanitarian assessments, planning, implementation and monitoring
 (Survey Question)



improved to address the needs of girls and women. This includes UN Women’s engagement in the WHS, the Grand Bargain Friends of Gender Group and the Global Platform for DRR, among others. In these forums, UN Women demonstrated how GEWE can be included in specific policies and frameworks. In fact, many respondents cited UN Women’s particular expertise in forming consensus around GEWE issues. At the country level, UN Women has used national structures, such as protection clusters, as a means to support coordination and implementation of gender-responsive normative frameworks, e.g. training on the gender marker.

Many respondents positively rated how UN Women focuses its efforts in the right areas to ensure gender-responsive HA, with 59 per cent of UN Women staff and 39 per cent of non-UN Women stakeholders rating this “significantly” and “completely” effective. However, over 25 per cent do not see this so positively, which may be due to the perception that some of UN Women’s interventions at the country level are seen as providing “on the ground” experience that can inform UN Women’s normative work as a basis for innovative approaches. Yet, these interventions are not always scalable to demonstrate viable effectiveness. This may also be due to the funding context, including UN Women’s reliance on short-term funding.

3.3

Connectedness and sustainability

How successful has UN Women been in designing and implementing its humanitarian work to contribute to longer-term development and sustainability, taking into account the humanitarian–development nexus?⁵⁰

FINDING 3:

UN Women’s work has tended to include activities that are more aligned with the development side of the humanitarian–development nexus, for example technical assistance and capacity building with governments and civil society. This trend also exists in disaster risk reduction where UN Women’s contributions tend to be focused on normative work and less on how households and communities become more resilient. UN Women has not had a sufficient role in the New Way of Working, nor in the IASC Task Team on Strengthening the Humanitarian–Development Nexus, leading to an inadequate focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment in these forums.

UN Women’s approach to HA, as described in the Humanitarian Strategy, is driven by the overall goal of integrating GEWE into HA at normative, coordination and operational levels.⁵¹ This tripartite approach recognizes the need to look beyond the immediate consequences of an emergency and how to address underlying imbalances of power and how they impact vulnerability. This is a long-term approach that takes into account vulnerabilities before, during and long after a crisis. In fact, many respondents noted that this capacity to work across the development–humanitarian nexus is a key strength for UN Women. By engaging in women’s economic empowerment,

⁵⁰ Connectedness refers to the need to ensure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context that takes longer-term and interconnected problems into account.

⁵¹ UN Women (2014). “UN Women Humanitarian Strategy 2014-2017.” Page 4 . <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/what%20we%20do/unwomen-humanitarianstrategy-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3341>

leadership, social norm change, GBV prevention, contribution to recovery/peace building/social cohesion/preparedness efforts at both the local and national levels, working closely with governments, law enforcements and CSOs, and in leveraging partnerships with gender advocates across humanitarian actors, UN Women demonstrates its key strengths. The issue is how to balance these activities with those closer to emergency responses.

A significant development in how humanitarian actors address the humanitarian–development nexus concerns the “Commitment to Action” from the 2016 WHS. The Commitment to Action was signed by the UN Secretary-General and the heads of UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, OCHA, WFP, FAO, UNFPA and UNDP, with the endorsement of the World Bank and the International Organization for Migration. In the same year, members of the International Dialogue on State Building and Peacebuilding, including NGOs, OECD INCAF member states and the United Nations committed to “advancing the Agenda for Humanity, as a way to transcend the divide between humanitarian and development actors to achieve collective outcomes supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in fragile and conflict affected contexts.”⁵²

This has led to the NWOW, which acknowledges that greater collaboration, coordination and coherence between humanitarian and development actors must be conducted in a way that respects humanitarian principles. The NWOW has been adopted as part of reform of UNDS and will entail the strengthening of the Resident Coordinator (RC) role and a reconfiguring of UN country presences.

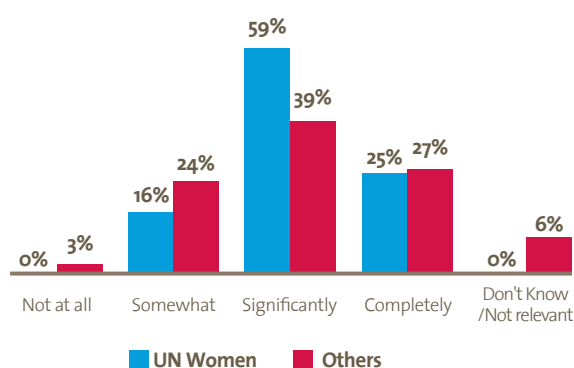
UN Women is not a member of the NWOW group, nor is the Entity part of the Humanitarian–Development Nexus Task Team. Current Humanitarian–Development Nexus Task Team efforts do not include a gender lens, GEWE outcomes or definitions of “collective outcomes” that have been placed at the centre of the commitments and are the concrete and measurable results of the NWOW.

The majority of UN Women’s humanitarian activities concentrate on technical assistance, capacity building

⁵² See the “New Way of Working” website at: <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/5358>.

FIGURE 9:
Does UN Women concentrate its efforts in the right areas to ensure gender-responsive humanitarian action? (1.2)

(Survey Question)



and support to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) activities, with programming focused on livelihood support. The most effective projects assessed by this evaluation included mostly developmental components of the humanitarian–development nexus, also when part of an early emergency response. For instance, UN Women supported a cash for work programme in response to the 2016 earthquake in Ecuador that affected approximately 720,000 people. UN Women trained more than 240 women on livelihood skills for income generation, such as building reconstruction and debris-removal activities, and certified 48 people from the earthquake affected area in masonry and construction skills. This is an example of how UN Women supported a traditional activity (cash for work) in ways that met needs and promoted GEWE in a humanitarian context.

The evaluation team observed various successful examples of livelihood programmes. Iraq reported 33 cash for work activities in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. These focused on vocational skills and included consultations with community leaders and camp management. As a result, 17 women refugees were hired by small businesses. A similar project exists in South Sudan where women were given training and seed capital for small enterprises as a way to overcome their vulnerabilities. While the scope of these projects was small, the way UN Women integrated women’s needs, skills development and sustainable employment shows how immediate and longer-term needs can be addressed simultaneously. The lessons from these programmes could also inform

how similar projects are replicated and brought to scale in other contexts.

UN Women has been active in DRR, an essential element in the trajectory between immediate, emergency action and longer-term development. In 2005, after the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake, the United Nations held the first World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR)⁵³ in Kobe, Japan to set global standards (Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015⁵⁴) combined with a Biennial Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to track progress. The Hyogo Framework was succeeded by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. This framework includes four priorities: understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to ‘Build Back Better’ in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.⁵⁵ The Sendai Framework also recognizes that “Empowering women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches is key.”⁵⁶

Concurrent with the development and implementation of a global framework for DRR, the humanitarian community strengthened its approaches to resilience. Resilience in HA is a way to ensure that people’s longer-term needs are incorporated into immediate HA. It provides both a framework for how people anticipate, withstand and recover from shocks as well as a way to make programmatic links between recovery, development and sustainability. While the subject still tends to be discussed in academic debates,⁵⁷

53 The annual conference is now called the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction <https://www.wcdr.org>.

54 This is hosted by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and focuses on natural hazards <https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/hfa>.

55 UNDRR (2015). “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030.” Page 14. https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf.

56 IBID; Page 21.

57 For a treatise on how debates about resilience are influencing humanitarian action and other sectors, see: A. V. Bahadur, Ibrahim, M. & Tanner, T. (2012). “The Resilience Renaissance? Unpacking of Resilience for Tackling Climate Change and Disasters.” Strengthening Climate Resilience Discussion; Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

its principles are critical for ensuring that humanitarian actors can spot opportunities to build resilience as part of their programming.⁵⁸

UN Women provided both coordination and normative support to Member States, civil society and UN organizations during the adoption of the 2015 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. UN Women has also supported governments in the implementation of the Sendai Framework. For instance, the 2018 “Progress Review and the Way Forward: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia,” is an example that focuses on how countries are approaching the Sendai Framework.

UN Women has been involved in various handbooks and guidance notes related to DRR and resilience. Along with UNISDR, GFDRR, the World Bank and the European Union, UN Women published a guidance note on “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Disaster Recovery.”⁵⁹ In 2018, in partnership with UNDP, UN Women published a workshop guide for “Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction in Europe and Central Asia.”⁶⁰ UN Women also made contributions to the guidelines for “Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Sensitive” published by ISDR, UNDP and IUCN.⁶¹

UNDP and UN Women have partnered at the regional level, including developing guidance on incorporating

gender perspectives in DRR programmes and initiatives, e.g. UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS, and the UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office in 2018.

A partnership with UNISDR and IFRC raised awareness at the global level on gender and DRR.⁶² The organizations developed the GIR to address the high and unequal risk exposure of women and girls to the impact of climate-related disasters and the detrimental effect this has on their levels of resilience as individuals, as well as their households and wider communities. The collaboration was intended to leverage IFRC’s global and local networks and outreach, UNISDR’s leadership on DRR and UN Women’s expertise on GEWE; however, the programme has not received the anticipated support.

To date, UN Women’s work has demonstrated some success, albeit inconsistent, in both of these streams. Because of UN Women’s reliance on non-core funding and because of the need to then position itself for different resource opportunities, the Entity has tended to be “supply” driven, capitalizing on opportunities as they arise rather than being able to be more coherent and strategic overall (see Table 1 in Section 2.2.) Consequently, UN Women has tended to find most traction in areas where it is recognized as a leader in its global, normative work and in activities closer to development cooperation. As noted throughout this evaluation, both opportunities and needs suggest that UN Women could have a more coherent, strategic and balanced approach to both streams of work in the future.

This may require some refinement of existing flagship programmes and strategies. UN Women’s flagship programmes for HA, LEAP and GIR, the Humanitarian Strategy and the Women’s Peace and Security Fund tend to include broader impact and outcome level indicators that could include “development” or “humanitarian” activities; how they contribute to the value of the tripartite approach; or

58 Simon Levine & Irina Mosel (2014). “Supporting Resilience in Difficult Places.” Overseas Development Institute. Adam Pain & Simon Levine; (2012). “A Conceptual Analysis of Livelihoods and Resilience: Addressing the ‘Insecurity of Agency.’” Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper. For a more econometric approach, see: Prabhu Pingali, Luca Alinovi and Jacky Sutton; (2005). “Food Security in Complex Emergencies: Enhancing Food System Resilience.” *Disasters*, Vol. 29, Issue Supplement 1.

59 GFDRR, UNISDR, IRP, The World Bank, & UN Women; (2018). “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Disaster Recovery.” <https://www.gfdrr.org/en/publication/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-disaster-recovery>.

60 See: UNDP & UN Women (2018). “Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction in Europe and Central Asia: Workshop Guide for Facilitators.” [https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Gender%20and%20Disaster%20Risk%20Reduction%20in%20Europe%20and%20Central%20Asia%20-%20Workshop%20Guide%20\(English\).pdf](https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Gender%20and%20Disaster%20Risk%20Reduction%20in%20Europe%20and%20Central%20Asia%20-%20Workshop%20Guide%20(English).pdf).

61 See: UNISDR, UNDP, and IUCN; (2009). “Policy and Practical Guidelines: Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Sensitive.” <https://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/9922>.

62 At the fifth [Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in May 2017](https://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2017/globalplatform/en/programme/special-events/view/808), UN Women co-hosted a special event on “Women’s leadership in disaster risk reduction” to bring greater attention to the gender inequality of risk and highlight best practices, lessons learned and recommendations for gender-responsive implementation of the Sendai Framework (source: <https://www.unisdr.org/conferences/2017/globalplatform/en/programme/special-events/view/808>).

how they, collectively, further contribute to country, regional or global strategies. While the LEAP and GIR's inherent flexibility could allow UN Women to capitalize on a myriad of opportunities, it could also limit the strategic intent of UN Women's HA programming. In turn, this could lead to less clarity about the specific role of UN Women in HA.

Given this and other analysis presented in the evaluation, UN Women needs a balanced approach to these activities, ensuring that its work is not carried out in isolation and that there are practical ways to make links between its normative, coordination and programming work. Every framework should be linked to a country-level response, grounding it in the operational complexities that humanitarian actors face. This should then in turn inform the global framework or policy, thus ensuring regular and systematic feedback loops.⁶³ While UN Women may still choose to work on issues closer to the development side of the humanitarian–development nexus, the needs of girls and women are of primary importance to HA and closer to the initial emergency response.

FINDING 4:

Partnerships with United Nations organizations in specific country contexts represent the greatest potential for UN Women to link its global normative and coordination work with programming. Working in partnership, especially with OCHA, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP will ensure that the needs of women and girls are met more effectively, and that gender equality and women's empowerment are incorporated in an "effective, consistent and practical manner," both at a scale and scope commensurate with needs.

UN Women recognizes the importance of partnerships. In 30 crisis country contexts, UN Women partnered with 9 INGOs and Red Cross/Crescent Societies and 14 UN agencies, including UNFPA, OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, UNISDR and WFP. In line with international commitments to localization and promoting women's leadership in humanitarian contexts, UN Women provided financial and technical support to

63 There are examples of this, as cited in the rest of the evaluation. The issue here is to become much more systematic, balancing every global policy with its practical application on the ground.

more than 498 women's organizations in humanitarian and crisis settings to strengthen their capacities to effectively engage in humanitarian and crisis response and influence strategic prioritization and resource allocation. These efforts were in a context of competition over resources where UN Women's desire to seek partnerships is often not reciprocated when it comes to funding requirements.

At the global, regional and country level there is not a shared common definition of UN Women's partnerships, nor is there a separate system within UN Women for tracking partnerships that are specific to HA. Knowledge management and learning on partnerships, as with other areas of HA, was identified as an area for improvement by the UN Women regional humanitarian advisers in the self-assessment questionnaire administered as part of the evaluation, with five of the six advisers rating the area as average or poor. In addition, the portfolio review could not determine consistent partnership results. For instance, the portfolio review found that countries such as DRC (whose actual HA budget shrunk from US\$ 4.2 million in 2016 to just US\$ 156,000 in 2018) and Pakistan (with no humanitarian funding in 2017 or 2018 given its transition away from emergency response) were initially included in the list of countries in the OCHA partnership, but had no identifiable results.

The evaluation attempted to track progress on the potential partnership initially foreseen with OCHA and included in the Humanitarian Action Plan (2014–2017). Aside from the Strategic Plan Framework and specific country-level reporting from UN Women, there was limited information. Evidence in Colombia of a partnership with OCHA was not available. One positive example of a strong country-level partnership with OCHA is the "Engendering Humanitarian Response" project in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), whose overall objective is to ensure that humanitarian response in oPt contributes to gender equality and addresses and advocates for the needs and priorities of women, men, girls and boys equitably and effectively. This partnership effort is considered effective given that it has been sustained over time. The project supports gender mainstreaming of the multi-year HRP with particular focus on supporting advocacy and response to the needs of women faced with specific vulnerabilities, including women at risk of displacement in Area C, female IDPs in Gaza, women victims of GBV, women working in agriculture and women with disabilities.

At country level, evidence from partnerships with humanitarian actors reveal mixed results. In the partnership with WFP, in which UN Women's global engagement is nascent, the evaluation found that WFP was nevertheless very satisfied with the collaboration in Jordan and in relation to blockchain.

At the global level, WFP recognizes a range of opportunities and needs that could be supported through engagement with UN Women from technical support to programme design and implementation, to support on how WFP reorganizes and strengthens internal structures to better achieve GEWE and normative work around sexual abuse by humanitarian actors themselves (PSEA). WFP identified UN Women as a strategic partner for programme design in relation to Syria +5; however, UN Women was not able to capitalize on this opportunity given limited clarity about its technical role and capacity, as expressed by a key WFP respondent in Rome. This was also noted in Bangladesh, where the two agencies had managed to partner on a small scale but, despite there being a strong willingness and much discussion on both sides, at the time of the evaluation the larger collaboration envisaged had not come to fruition. WFP struggles with organizations that seek partnerships because of WFP's scale of operation: when the partner cannot be specific about what it can provide, and cannot do so at a reasonable scale, it is hard to justify the return on the investment. UN Women's approach is not always conducive to this level of practical consideration, especially given the longer-term and transformative nature of GEWE.

Yet, there were various positive examples of partnership at the country level. In the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar, UN Women secured two multi-purpose women's centres. In this context, UN Women has the possibility of setting an example and developing standards for other women's centres in the response. This can feed into the Gender Hub and enable sharing with other actors for possible replication and identification of good practices.

Another example of an effective partnership was the preparation and (pending) implementation of the National Resilience Plan in Bangladesh, in partnership with UNDP and UNOPS. This partnership benefited from the enabling factors of a similar organizational culture with UNDP, a clear division of roles and responsibilities and shared vision, common goals and objectives. Although delays have occurred due

to elections, the preparatory phase went smoothly, and the project has received substantial funding (just under US\$ 13 million) from DFID and SIDA. All stakeholders interviewed had positive impressions of the partnership to date, with UN Women's added value clearly articulated and the engagement of key government stakeholders underway.

As stated in UN Women's evaluation on partnerships, UN Women could develop an overarching strategy and/or guiding document on its key strategic partnerships in HA, including a definition of a strategic partnership, guidance on why it is strategic and what steps are needed to manage, maintain and assess these strategic partnerships over time. Additionally, a framework or system for tracking progress on partnerships would also be needed. In-country and remote interviews with UN Women staff and external stakeholders demonstrated there was limited bilateral strategic engagement with key humanitarian donors, overall and at the country level, to discuss and share strategies on enhanced GEWE. Engagement with key INGOs was also more limited in the field, identified in only 10 per cent of countries through the portfolio review,⁶⁴ with strengthening of national capacities often favoured.

UN agencies interviewed as part of this evaluation cited opportunities to partner with UN Women in country contexts where there is strong leadership and capacity, and a collaborative approach. During country-level missions, this was most apparent in Bangladesh, Colombia and South Sudan. However, these same respondents stated that UN Women's in-country capacity was the main barrier to partnership. The larger UN agencies stated that UN Women needs to be predictable, reliable and in a position to follow through on realistic commitments, which UN Women struggles to do in the context of its financial reality. UN agencies at the country level signalled that UN Women should have more staff capacity at the decentralized field level. UN Women's prioritization of HA has also been a factor. When UN agencies make a request to engage with UN Women at the country level, UN Women staff are often overstretched and have faced constraints in offering assistance.

⁶⁴ Based on the analysis of 2018 partnerships. Results were mostly consistent in the years examined (2014–2018). The actual number of countries with INGO partnerships may be higher, as there is no systematic method for capturing these partnerships in UN Women's systems and the evaluation had to rely on the documentation available in RMS, country reporting and Strategic Notes.

Some of UN Women's efforts could be made in partnership with key agencies, e.g. review of gender in humanitarian architecture in Jordan and future efforts to roll out the IASC Accountability Framework on the Gender Policy. There is a trade-off between visibility and partnership issues to consider. Indeed, UN Women is often less recognized for its actions than other agencies and needs to make its role more visible.

3.4 Effectiveness

To what extent is UN Women effective in integrating gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action through its normative, coordination and operational work? ⁶⁵

FINDING 5:

UN Women's global normative work is effective in ensuring that policies, guidelines and frameworks sufficiently address gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women has many examples of coordinating and facilitating different actors, for example, during the World Humanitarian Summit, to incorporate gender into humanitarian action. The Entity's work in coordination at the country level is nascent, with some good examples, yet it has limited consistency or strategic focus overall. In addition, the Entity's country-level programming requires improvement, mostly because of the size and scope of projects and the funding available. Despite this, the evaluation found some effective examples in this area. UN Women can become more effective by being more consistent and strategic overall and by emphasizing the complementarity and interlinkages between its normative, coordination and programming work.

As described in Section 3.2, UN Women has been engaged in a range of international forums where it has emphasized the role of GEWE in HA. This section addresses the effectiveness of the major contributions to these forums, and how and if these

⁶⁵ Effectiveness measures the extent to which an activity achieves its purpose, or whether this can be expected to happen on the basis of the outputs. Implicit within the criterion of effectiveness is timeliness.

contributions have resulted in more effective responses in specific contexts.

Without membership of IASC, the Gender Reference Group in Humanitarian Action (GRG) remains a key mechanism for UN Women to influence the humanitarian architecture and ensure continued focus on gender in humanitarian responses. The GRG is expected to support all IASC bodies on GEWE programming and to lead the systematic dissemination of related policies. Some stakeholders interviewed considered that UN Women has played a key role in maintaining a focus on gender and the GRG in IASC.

Following the endorsement of the IASC Gender Policy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls (2017) in Humanitarian Action, UN Women undertook stewardship of the "Gender Desk" charged with monitoring the Accountability Framework.⁶⁶ UN Women supported the revised IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action in April 2018, including an e-learning platform hosted by UN Women's Learning Centre "Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action eLearning."⁶⁷ Also in 2018, UN Women initiated data collection and analysis for the first Accountability Framework Report, expected to be published in 2019. This has been spoken of favourably by various respondents to this evaluation, although the precise results are yet to be seen.

Through the Friends of Gender Group, UN Women focuses on four priority Grand Bargain workstreams: localization, cash, participation revolution and comprehensive needs assessments. UN Women and CARE co-chair a subworkstream on cash and gender that seeks to ensure that cash-based interventions are designed in ways that women can access and benefit from, in line with the ODI evaluation findings.⁶⁸ These interventions were noted as particularly effective by relevant respondents.

⁶⁶ The effectiveness of the Gender Desk falls beyond the scope of this evaluation. It may warrant a separate evaluation.

⁶⁷ IASC e-learning on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action, available at: <https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/portal/product/iasc-e-learning-on-gender-equality-in-humanitarian-action>.

⁶⁸ Bastagli, Francesca & Jessica Hagen-Zanker, Luke Harman, Georgina Sturge, Valentina Barca, Tanja Schmidt, Luca Pellerano; (2016) "Cash Transfers: What Does the Evidence Say?" Overseas Development Institute. Pages 216-224. See also: Kate Latimir and Howard Mollet (2018). "Not What She Bargained For? Gender and the Grand Bargain." CARE and ActionAid. Pages 12, 13.

FIGURE 10:

UN Women’s contributions to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

<p>At CSW 2015 Hosted workshop for civil society activists on the topic of Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and the WHS to generate recommendations for the consultation on process for the WHS and were shared at other women’s consultations and workshops.</p>	<p>At CSW 2016 High Level Leaders Roundtable on Women and Girls: Catalyzing Action to Achieve Gender Equality, CSW60 High Level Side Event "Achieving Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Humanitarian Action Through the World Humanitarian Summit". Included participation of the Executive Director of UN Women, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Member States and women civil society. The 2016 CSW Agreed Conclusions underlined the imperative of empowering women in leadership and decision-making in all aspects of responding to and recovering from crises, the need to prioritize women’s and girls’ needs in humanitarian action and in all emergency situations; stressing the need for every humanitarian response to take measures to address sexual and gender-based violence.</p>	<p>At CSW 2017 Estimating the economic cost of violence against women in the Arab region.</p>	<p>At CSW 2019 Leveraging cash transfers to reduce intimate partner violence at scale: Promise and potential from research around the globe.</p>
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In line with its strategy, UN Women used the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as a forum to promote discussion and advocate for women and girls. These forums are opportunities to ensure that women, girls and civil society are part of the conversation, and to bring to the forefront issues for discussion. As Figure 10 shows, this has led to actions in a number of forums, from the WHS to global cash transfer approaches.

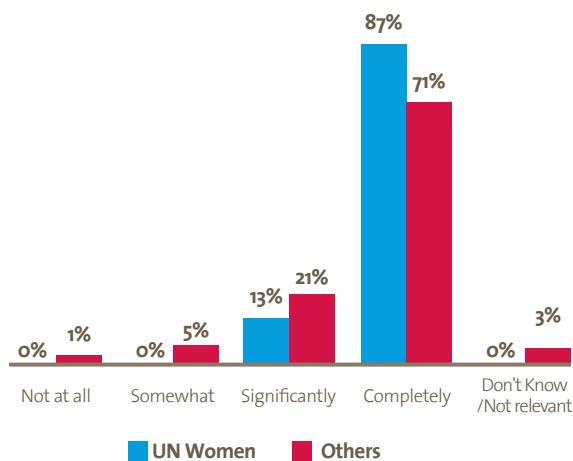
During the WHS, UN Women seconded a staff member to OCHA as a means of guaranteeing sustained focus on the gender agenda, while simultaneously advocating for GEWE. UN Women led one of seven high-level sessions and ensured that “catalysing action to achieve gender equality” was adopted as a core commitment. In each of the examples above, UN Women supported, facilitated and ultimately delivered on better or new policies that address GEWE.

In early 2019, UN Women initiated the establishment of a subgroup on gender-responsive, localization-related issues, initially composed of UN Women, CARE and OXFAM. This workstream could benefit from UN Women’s historical comparative advantage, i.e. the Entity’s close relationship with women’s groups and civil society.

In relation to DRR, UN Women has been active globally, as noted above, and in specific regions. In West Africa, UN Women provided inputs into how the Arab/Africa Regional DRR platform addressed GEWE. In the Europe and Central Asia Region, UN Women ensured that gender was mainstreamed in the outcome document of the European Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction (2017). UNDP and UN Women have partnered at the regional level, including developing guidance on incorporating gender perspectives in DRR programmes and initiatives, e.g. UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS, and the UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office in 2018. In the Latin America and Caribbean region, HACRO provided technical support to the Regional Office in preparation for the “VI Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction” of the Americas and also supported the Asia–Pacific Regional Stakeholder Consultation Workshop in Thailand to validate the GIR programme.

There are many examples of how UN Women has contributed to more effective DRR both regionally and at the country level. These include the Malawi National Action Plan for gender-responsive HA (in partnership with Oxfam) that is being used to influence humanitarian actors in the country. In Ethiopia,

FIGURE 11:
Rate the importance of providing technical gender expertise in humanitarian action into the formulation of humanitarian normative policy, standards, guidance and resources etc.
 (Survey Question)



UN Women and OCHA support the National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC) to mainstream gender into recovery and resilience efforts. This includes the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Gender Working Group (2018) which brings together humanitarian actors from both government and NGOs to facilitate the inclusion of gender dimensions in all stages of the humanitarian programme cycle. In Kazakhstan, UN Women and OCHA have supported the preparation of the Central Asia-Caucasus DRR platform and participated in the Asia-Caucasus Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) meetings and retreats. UN Women co-led the side event on gender-responsive DRR with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in Japan during the World Assembly for Women (WAW!) event in 2018 and supported a side event at the high-level sessions on gender for the Arab/Africa Regional DRR platform in Tunis (October 2018).

UN Women has also made links between its global normative work and country-level response through gender alerts and “aide memoires.” Between 2013 and 2017, UN Women was involved in the preparation of several gender alerts, e.g. Ebola,⁶⁹ South Sudan,⁷⁰

69 IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action; (February 2015). “Humanitarian Crisis in West Africa (Ebola) Gender Alert.”

70 IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action; (May 2014). “Humanitarian Crisis in South Sudan Gender Alert 2.”

Yemen,⁷¹ CAR,⁷² Iraq,⁷³ Nepal,⁷⁴ and Hurricane Irma.⁷⁵ These build on existing knowledge, describing key underlying factors that affect the humanitarian response from a gender dynamics perspective, and identify key action points in priority areas.

Survey respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the need for technical gender expertise in HA for the formulation of humanitarian normative policy, standards and guidance. Seventy-four per cent of non-UN Women respondents rated this as “completely” important with very few citing it as unimportant (see Figure 11). This is slightly different from a conclusion in this report which states that the importance lies the other way around, with normative policies, standards and guidance being the most important way to influence programming. Nonetheless, it corresponds to the widespread consensus that GEWE is important as both a rights issue and as an issue of programme effectiveness.

There is broad consensus about the importance of GEWE and the usefulness of UN Women’s guidance on gender-responsive HA as shown in Figure 13. Figure 13 shows that over 64 per cent of UN Women and non-UN Women respondents rated UN Women’s guidance in relation to knowledge on gender-responsive HA as useful, with a much greater spread among both UN Women and non-UN Women respondents when compared to Figure 12. Only 22 per cent of non-UN Women respondents rated this as either “somewhat” (19 per cent) or “not at all” effective (3 per cent).

In considering evidence from the semi-structured interviews, there was some division between those who worked at the country level and those UN Women staff working in headquarters in New York and Geneva. Headquarters staff tended to be

71 IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action; (July 2015). “Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen Gender Alert.”

72 IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action; (June 2014). “Humanitarian Crisis in Central African Republic (CAR) Gender Alert.”

73 IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action; (September 2014). “Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq Gender Alert.”

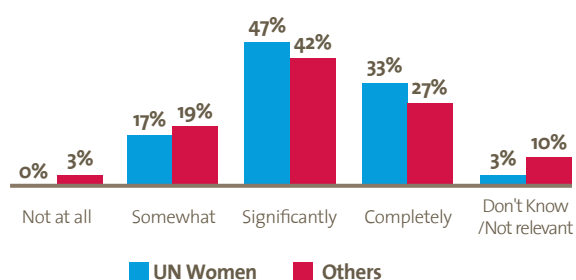
74 IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action; (May 2015). “Humanitarian Crisis in Nepal Gender Alert.”

75 IASC Reference Group for Gender in Humanitarian Action; (September 2017). “Humanitarian Crisis in the Caribbean Gender Alert.”

somewhat more informed and positive about UN Women’s normative contributions, while staff at country level were less knowledgeable and often unsure of the practical and operational implications of global policies.

FIGURE 12:
How useful for effective humanitarian action is UN Women’s guidance in relation to knowledge on gender-responsive humanitarian action and with respect to accountability frameworks?

(Survey Question)



FINDING 6:

UN Women’s direct programming reaches a small proportion of the women and girls in need and is not always consistent in scope and quality. However, the effectiveness of UN Women’s global, regional and increasingly local work on standards and guidelines rightly contributes to how women and girls are served in various humanitarian responses.

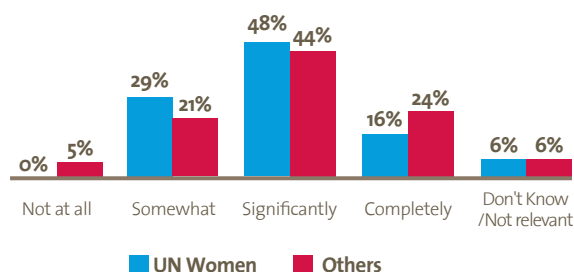
As per the evaluation’s portfolio review, UN Women reported providing services to 235,000 crisis affected women and girls, and 89,000 men and boys, across 33 countries in 2018. This is up from 208,000 persons (79 per cent were women and girls) in 31 countries in 2017. This represents significant growth in one year, particularly within the financial context in which UN Women operates. However, actual needs reveal an increasing demand for more actors to be involved in this area. In 2018, OCHA reported that there were approximately 141,000,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance with 101,200,000 targeted by inter-agency appeals.

In its results reporting, UN Women tends to treat its activities as discrete “projects,” with results reported as such. Project activity results therefore often overlook UN Women’s broader normative approaches, including global policies, guidelines and frameworks, and have limited reference to indicate that projects were either addressing needs neglected in system-wide humanitarian responses, or that delivery was improved through UN Women’s programming approach. If such links were evidenced, e.g. that policies, frameworks and guidelines indicated what should be done and then UN Women engaged in activities in different humanitarian contexts to show how this could be done, then the value would be in “piloting” these activities to showcase best practice and to codify standard operating procedures about how they could be implemented, based on evidence. This did happen in some instances, e.g. the Oasis centres in Jordan; and, in some cases, successful projects are showcased as best practice in a retroactive manner. As many respondents stated, UN Women could be much more proactive in using its normative work to identify where different humanitarian activities could be significantly improved through a focus on GEWE.

These responses indicate that there may be an opportunity to be more strategic about how, when and where to engage in “stand-alone” projects at the country level. This could be based on demonstrable gaps between global policies, frameworks and guidelines to which UN Women has contributed and how traditional humanitarian activities are delivered in different responses. These projects could then be positioned as pilots, ideally implemented through partnerships, with the intent to assess both their efficacy overall and their potential to be replicated in other contexts or brought to scale, usually by other humanitarian actors, thereby increasing both coverage, quality and sustainability. This means that UN Women would be less “demand driven,” and more strategic, building on all aspects of UN Women’s tripartite mandate. It also requires that UN Women has a delineated common structure for the services it consistently provides in different scenarios to ensure minimum standards are met.

FIGURE 13:
How effective is UN Women's work to enhance gender-responsive policies for humanitarian action?

(Survey Question)



The portfolio review identified technical assistance, capacity building, safe spaces,⁷⁶ and SGBV prevention and protection as the most common UN Women activities. Technical assistance has remained a key area of focus for UN Women for the last four years, with 88 per cent of country programmes engaged in HA providing technical assistance in 2018, up from 83 per cent in 2014. Capacity-building activities have experienced the most growth, with 75 per cent of country programmes engaged in HA providing capacity building in 2017, up from 33 per cent in 2014.

Most respondents to the evaluation survey and in the interviews stated that “technical assistance” and “capacity building” were the most important areas of focus for UN Women. It is unclear whether these perceptions are based on actual needs or are the areas where UN Women has shown the most competence. Evidence suggests the latter and, as noted in Section 3.3, respondents tended to conflate this with UN Women’s normative work.

There has been a decrease in livelihood activities, with 67 per cent of countries in the humanitarian portfolio reporting livelihood activities dropping 26 per cent between 2014 and 2018.⁷⁷ While the total number of countries engaged in livelihood activities has decreased, the number of people reached by the activities has more than doubled between 2014 (34,400 people reached) and 2018 (79,974). However, these numbers are still small compared to the number of people in need. It is

⁷⁶ Also referred to as “multi-purpose centres” or “cohesion spaces.”

⁷⁷ HACRO Supplementary Report 2018, draft.

also not clear how effective these activities have been. While project reporting is generally positive, the evaluation noted weak practices in projects in South Sudan, Cameroon and Colombia, and positive examples in Bangladesh and Jordan. As in other areas, this indicates an inconsistency in results that may hamper UN Women’s efforts in this area. Nonetheless, lessons can be learned from both effective and ineffective practices, especially given the complementarity of UN Women’s programming, coordination and normative work.

Activities related to SGBV prevention and response decreased significantly from 83 per cent in 2014 to 29 per cent of countries reporting GBV work in 2018. This is largely due to UNFPA’s increased role in this area and, as such, may actually represent a success as UNFPA incorporates UN Women’s advice and guidance into its work.⁷⁸

UN Women has also conducted work in various countries on “safe spaces,” also referred to as multi-purpose centres or cohesion spaces. These spaces have been common for many years and are typically physical structures where a number of services are provided to women refugees and IDPs, including access/referral to legal and protective services, psychosocial support and sexual and reproductive health services.⁷⁹ The first safe space set up by UN Women was reported in South Sudan in 2014. By 2018, UN Women reported 66 safe spaces and empowerment centres, including 26 new spaces in 13 countries.⁸⁰ The management of these safe spaces varies from country to country with most managed by UN Women, and some managed by government/state actors and CSOs (19 per cent and 18 per cent respectively) (see Figure 14). Project reporting and the semi-structured interviews show that these spaces have been largely effective.

However, there has sometimes been a tendency to conflate “safe spaces” with “livelihood” activities. For instance, the Oasis centres in Jordan include textile and entrepreneur training. However, when the evaluation team met with women’s groups

⁷⁸ This analysis does not include final 2018 figures.

⁷⁹ UN Women (2019). “UN Women strategic positioning paper on GBV.” Draft as of 17 April 2019.

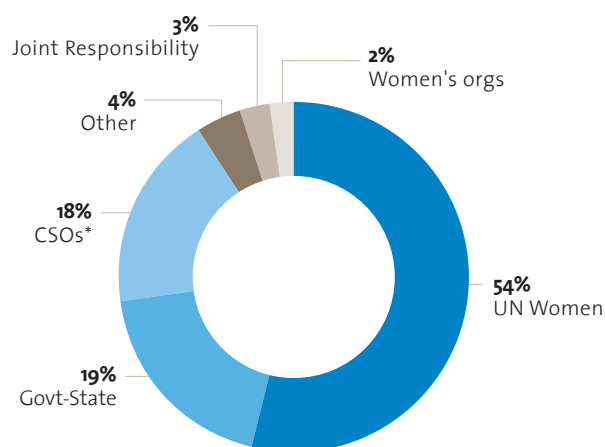
⁸⁰ It is not clear from the data if at the time of the evaluation all of these spaces were already functional.

in Jordan, they said that while they appreciated the training, it was not related to sectors that had significant market potential. As one person said, “Everyone knows how to sew, and everyone is selling their wares in the markets.” What these same groups of women did state, however, was how effective the safe spaces were in combining childcare with a literal “safe space” away from their caravans and tents where they could discuss issues, problem solve, commiserate and celebrate, and benefit from the “sisterhoods” that these safe spaces create. While this evaluation does not have enough comparative evidence from other safe spaces, these centres do represent a way of addressing the particular needs of women that respondents found both unique and exceptionally helpful.

Overall, respondents to the evaluation’s survey rated UN Women’s ability to better serve women and girls in a mixed way. While the overall response was positive with 29 per cent and 32 per cent of respondents rating this “significantly” and “completely” effective, compared to other survey questions, 38 per cent rated UN Women’s contributions to more women and girls being better served as only “somewhat” or “not at all” effective. This represents a disparity from other areas, where UN Women respondents tended to be more positive. In exploring this during the semi-structured interviews, most cited the small scale of programming activities and some questioned how UN Women could be expected to have the technical expertise to effectively implement livelihood or other sector-specific projects. This coincides with the evaluation team’s observation of various projects during its country-level missions. At the same time, most respondents could cite the various ways that particular projects did serve the needs of women and girls.

This incongruence highlights a recurring theme and some tensions in how UN Women views its programming role. First, while there is broad consensus that UN Women’s global normative work can and should be used to design more effective programming, there are mixed views about how that programming, in turn, informs UN Women’s

FIGURE 14:
Actors managing UN Women sponsored safe spaces (2018)



global normative work. A majority of respondents stated that UN Women’s country-level programming activities were too small to deliver substantive results. In fact, this has been cited as one of the reasons that UN Women should seek more country-level projects so that it can gain more experience and thus create more knowledge and learning for UN Women’s global normative work. It is also unclear, given the examples cited above, that UN Women projects are of consistent quality to be used to demonstrate a particularly effective approach or model.

The evaluation has highlighted good examples of gender-responsive humanitarian work, such as safe spaces in Jordan and Bangladesh, livelihood projects in Colombia and South Sudan, and the range of ways that UN Women has supported government entities and civil society through technical assistance and capacity building. In most cases, these examples tend to be ad hoc and/or developed independently at the country level and based on available resources instead of addressing particular gaps or needs in specific responses or have been designed to highlight a particular approach unique and pioneered by UN Women. More importantly, by treating these projects as relatively “discrete”, results data and information tend to ignore how they correspond to and/or complement UN Women’s normative and coordination work globally.

FINDING 7:

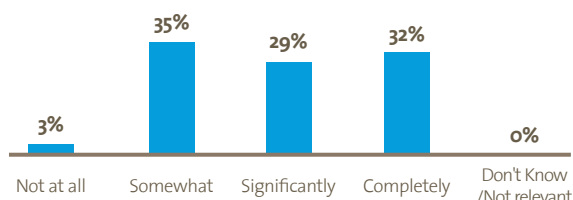
Effective coordination requires an in-depth knowledge of the relevant mechanisms, both globally and in specific responses, and how to leverage these towards more effective humanitarian action. UN Women has significant knowledge from its work in forums such as those associated with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the World Humanitarian Summit. UN Women's coordination work in the Humanitarian Country Teams, clusters and working groups included some positive examples, though, there does not seem to be sufficient common knowledge of these local coordination mechanisms for UN Women to be consistently effective.

UN Women continues to work towards the inclusion of gender through existing mechanisms, mainly the HCT and clusters. Not being a member of IASC means that inclusion in the HCT is not guaranteed, but rather depends on both the skills of staff on the ground (internal factor), as well as the appetite and support of other actors (external factor). While there is recognition on UN Women's part that the Entity does not always have the right expertise, experience and skills at headquarters level and on the ground, some stakeholders interviewed felt that institutional competition could have played a part in the resistance to UN Women's participation.

IASC membership was an issue repeatedly mentioned by UN Women respondents. UN Women's application to IASC has twice been rejected and this signals possible caution by IASC members regarding UN Women's broader role in HA. Acceptance into IASC was identified in various interviews as necessary to secure credibility, access and influence. At the same time, there are examples of how UN Women has achieved this without IASC membership.

For instance, in South Sudan UN Women has a multi-pronged strategy to gain credibility and

FIGURE 15:
Are UN Women's processes and procedures efficient in the context of a humanitarian response? (Survey Question UN Women staff only)



influence within the country clusters. This includes seeking sponsorship of the GenCap;⁸¹ capacity building for gender focal points; regular participation in the relevant inter-cluster working groups; and potential support to local NGOs (especially women-run NGOs and civil society actors) who seek funding from the country-based pooled fund (CBPF). The latter example is particularly important as one can cite OCHA's ability to convene and coordinate as being enhanced by its management of the CBPFs and the resources they provide. If UN Women strengthened proposals on GEWE aspects and how they addressed the needs of girls and women, the funds would not only be contributing to more effective HA, but would also enable different actors to obtain the resources to do so.

There are other positive examples. In the oPt, OCHA respondents commented favourably on the placement of a UN Women staff member in its office. Placement of UN Women staff in OCHA in Yemen and in support of the WHS also resulted in positive outcomes.

Other examples are less positive. In DRC, UN Women is not included in the HCT because it does not have the capacity or number of staff required to qualify. In Somalia, there are perceived independence issues because of staff members' affiliations with the government.

UN Women has increased its presence from 10 Country Offices reporting participation in the HCT or one (or more) clusters in 2014 to 22 in 2018, including leadership roles in the protection cluster in the Pacific region. Participation in the protection cluster is the most

⁸¹ For a good overview of the GenCap, please see: Steets, J. & Meier C. (2011). "Evaluation of the Protection Standby Capacity (ProCap) and Gender Standby Capacity (GenCap) projects." Global Policy Institute.

TABLE 7:**Number of countries participating in coordination structures** (Source: Dara Portfolio Review)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Protection Cluster	4	4	7	6	4
GBV WG	2	2	5	7	3
HCT	2	2	3	4	4
GIHA WG	0	1	3	4	5
ICCG	2	2	2	3	2
Livelihoods WG	1	2	1	1	2
Early Recovery	1	0	1	1	0
Food Security	0	0	2	0	1
Shelter cluster	0	1	0	1	0
CCCM	0	1	0	0	0
Health Cluster	0	0	1	0	0
WASH Cluster	0	0	1	0	0
Education Cluster	0	0	0	0	1

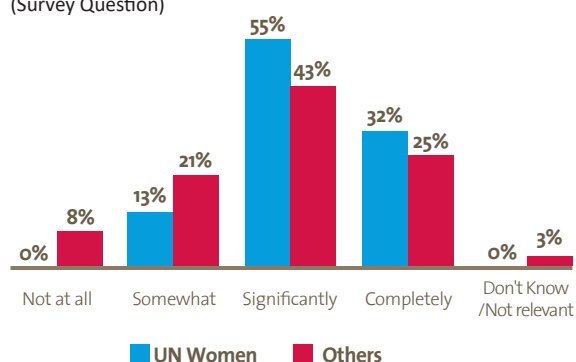
common area of coordination, followed by participation in the GBV and GiHA working groups (see Table 7).

Survey respondents had a positive perception overall of how this level of participation makes coordination mechanisms more gender-sensitive (see Figure 16). However, in interviews, many respondents stated that UN Women does not have sufficient knowledge of the humanitarian architecture to effectively influence the HCT, clusters, working groups, HNO, HRP, or to engage with donors to influence overall programming strategies, Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF) and CBPFs, etc.

FIGURE 16:

Does UN Women contribute to making coordination mechanisms for humanitarian response more gender-sensitive?

(Survey Question)



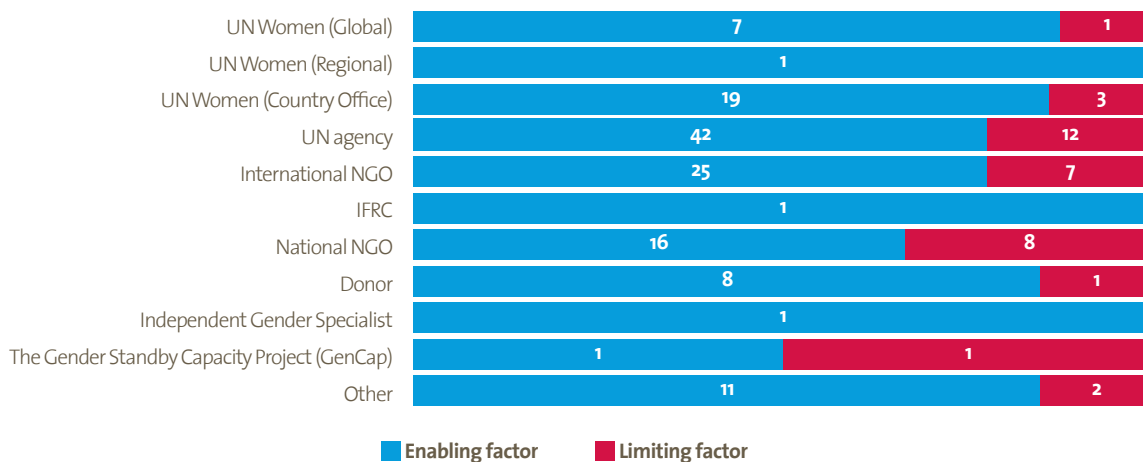
These mixed views and mixed examples point to the need for a comprehensive strategy on coordination mechanisms, including the IASC relationship once the term of GRG co-chairing ends. This may prevent UN Women from being equipped to support how humanitarian actors meet the needs of girls and women. A more integrated strategy, such as the one in South Sudan on influencing the clusters, could be a model. Links to funding sources (CBPFs, CERF) could also be a powerful way to influence coordination mechanisms.

3.5 Perceptions of UN Women's tripartite mandate

As noted in previous sections, a recurring theme is how and if UN Women maximizes the complementarity and interlinkages between its normative, coordination and programming work.

Nearly all respondents to this evaluation agreed that UN Women's mandate is an important aspect of how it contributes to HA. As Figure 17 illustrates, this perception exists across cohorts. Most stakeholder groups' responses have 60 per

FIGURE 17:
Is UN Women's mandate an enabling or limiting factor?



cent or more responses that consider UN Women’s mandate an enabling factor. Within UN Women, several respondents stated that UN Women’s tripartite mandate was not well understood and created confusion. GenCap specialists’ responses were divided, with 50 per cent considering it an enabling factor and 50 per cent a limiting factor.⁸² This illustrates the common perception that UN Women’s mandate – while not always understood – is an appropriate approach. What is less clear is how the three areas have reinforced each other at different times and in different contexts.

However, during interviews, a common perception was that UN Women does not have the capacity or resources to address all three elements of its mandate and should focus only on known gaps, mainly normative and coordination for gender mainstreaming. Some respondents went so far as to state that UN Women should not be involved in any level of programming.

These and other responses tend to be based on the inconsistent way in which UN Women has leveraged its tripartite mandate. However, there are examples of how the Entity has done this well. For instance, in UN Women’s Cameroon Country Office, the HA programme has carried out extensive work to adapt and contextualize the IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action,

⁸² Despite exploring this difference among GenCap respondents in semi-structured interviews, there was no discernable trend in what may have led to this response.

including developing “tip sheets” for various sectors, and was familiarizing and building capacity in the use of the gender marker through the gender focal points. UN Women’s support to the revised IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action represents a way to leverage such guidelines and frameworks at the country level. The Handbook includes an e-learning platform that was hosted and developed by UN Women, as well as face to face training and training of trainers to support implementation at the country level. The training programme has been delivered in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Nigeria, Malawi, Myanmar, Turkey and Palestine to hundreds of frontline humanitarian practitioners in over 40 different agencies. This is another example of how work at the normative level can directly feed into the operational level and is strengthened through UN Women’s coordination mandate.

Annex 13 includes a list of internal and external factors that contribute to the achievement of results.

3.6 Efficiency

Do UN Women’s institutional arrangements and mechanisms support efficient and timely humanitarian responses?⁸³

⁸³ Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – achieved as a result of inputs. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving an output, to see whether the most efficient approach has been used.

FINDING 8:

While UN Women has results management policies and systems, these are not sufficiently tailored to the humanitarian operating environment that requires specific guidelines, operating procedures and strategic principles to enable the Entity's offices to respond quickly and consistently to emergencies and complex humanitarian responses. Institutional arrangements, including fast-track mechanisms and standard operating procedures, are currently not fit for purpose to allow UN Women to function in a fast-moving environment. Overall capacity also needs to be made more consistent for different levels of response, and humanitarian principles need to be reinforced across UN Women's work in humanitarian action.

Institutional arrangements are the policies, systems and processes that organizations use to plan and manage their activities efficiently and to effectively partner with others to fulfil their mandate. In the context of UN Women's humanitarian work, this includes guidance on flagship programmes and selection and contracting procedures for implementing partners.⁸⁴ The purpose of these institutional arrangements and operational mechanisms is to enable an efficient response that is in line with UN Women's strategic objectives.

The creation of the Humanitarian Unit led to the development of UN Women's Humanitarian Strategy (2014–2017), the Humanitarian Framework and the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs). At the time of the evaluation, the UN Women's Humanitarian Strategy had not been renewed, while the Humanitarian Framework and the SOPs were still in draft form. Various stakeholders interviewed pointed to this limited, unclear guidance at corporate level and highlighted that a necessary first step would be to have internal clarity on UN Women's level of commitment to HA and the

⁸⁴ It would also include the RMS annual strategic planning and donor reporting processes, but these have already been addressed in previous sections.

types of services it would provide, before the Entity could position itself vis-a-vis other actors.

The limited strategic focus of some of UN Women's humanitarian initiatives hinder its contribution and could undermine UN Women's credibility, although opening a path for "growth" in this area. An example of this is the partnership with WFP on "Building Blocks – Blockchain", an effort to enhance cash-based programming for refugee women beneficiaries (an innovative and different type of approach than many others considered in this evaluation).

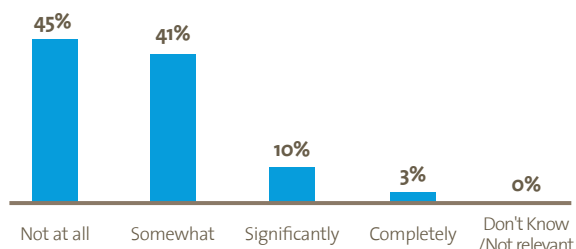
From an operational perspective, the flagship programmes (especially LEAP and GIR in relation to HA) provide broad frameworks with indicators and results that frame various levels of UN Women's contributions to HA to date. There is a wealth of other procedures including lists of recommended key points for post-disaster needs assessments, examples of gender indicators for flash appeals, rapid assessment checklists and presentations on the LEAP, etc.

However, most respondents at the country level were not readily familiar with these procedures, or sometimes retrofitted their programmes into the flagship theories of change and results data. For example, in Cameroon the same activities were implemented before and after the flagship initiative was introduced. The flagship did not prompt any re-assessment or changes but was simply a new way to reconfigure what was already being implemented.

Survey results and interviews highlighted the perception that existing institutional arrangements are not adequate in the context of a typical humanitarian response. Only 13 per cent of respondents had a positive view of UN Women's institutional arrangements, with 45 per cent answering they are "not at all efficient." Interviews with key stakeholders supported the view that UN Women needs to adapt its operational processes to be able to respond in a timely manner and that this is dependent upon the Entity having the right human resources in place at the very earliest stage of a response.

With a few exceptions, UN Women's humanitarian activities do not rely heavily on procurement. At the same time, respondents stated that when

FIGURE 18:
Are UN Women's processes and procedures efficient in the context of a humanitarian response?
 (Survey Question UN Women staff only)



goods and services need to be procured, there can be significant delays, or that UN Women needs to rely on other actors for such procurement. For instance, there were procurement issues associated with supplies for entrepreneur activities in the Oasis centres in Jordan that may have prevented a partnership with UNICEF as they ramped-up the Makani centres. UNICEF stated that it was interested in working with UN Women on the Makani centres, but decided against doing so because of the perceived procurement issues associated with the Oasis centres.

Concern over delays in these processes were raised by both partners and donors, with the CERF reporting that half of the programmes supported in 2018 had been delayed for administrative reasons,⁸⁵ with the impact of delays being particularly serious given the short lifespan of CERF funded projects. It took over three months to hire the *duplicas*, funded under the CERF in Mocoa, Colombia, for a 12-month project. Unsurprisingly, 60 per cent of survey respondents viewed UN Women's internal procedures, such as procurement, recruitment, disbursement of funds, etc. as a limiting factor to UN Women's effectiveness and efficiency.

The lack of appropriate fast-track procedures for humanitarian emergencies was raised by UN Women staff as a barrier to efficient and timely responses. Fast-track procedures have been under development since early 2018. A draft version was shared with the evaluation team for review, prompting a number of observations:

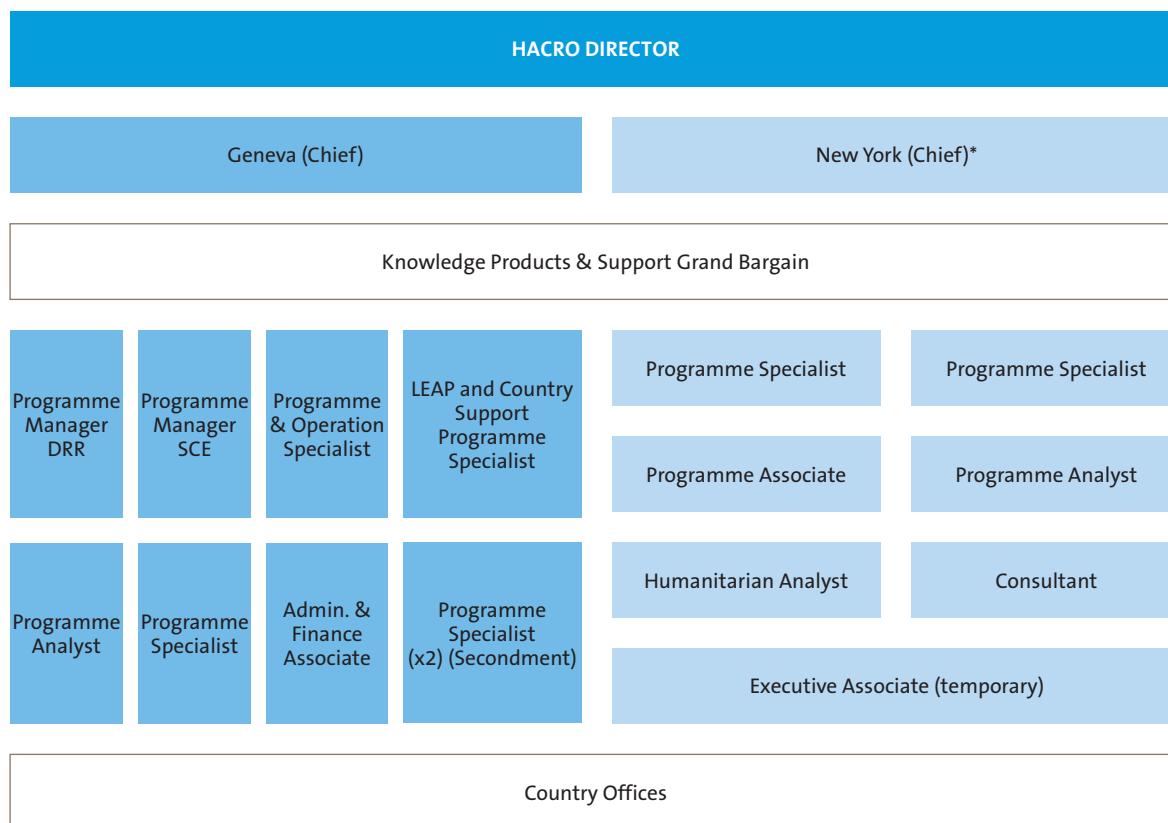
- Not only is it optional for UN Women Country Offices to engage when a humanitarian emergency occurs, it is also at the discretion of UN Women senior management to determine whether a Country Office has the capacity to properly use the fast-track procedures and, if not, to deny the request for activation.
- The activation process is quite complex, involving an initial meeting, the establishment of a Crisis Management Committee, a request submitted from the Country Office to the Regional Office, the request being reviewed by the Regional Office and then submitted to headquarters, after which a final review of the request is completed by headquarters before the mechanism can be activated. This process can take between three and nine days, depending on turnaround time at each step of the process.
- The fast-track procedure for partner selection appears greatly improved, given that, according to staff interviewed, this can currently delay implementation of programming in an emergency by up to two months. The option to "pre-qualify" possible partners is a positive step, although the overall timeframe required for the process remains unclear.

Based on interviews, most relevant HA staff at regional and country levels stated that they had not been engaged in the development of the fast-track procedures. Staff expressed concern that this may limit understanding of the issues faced in the field and how these are impacted by such procedures, increasing the likelihood that the final version of the fast-track mechanism will be difficult to implement adequately.

Inadequacy of funds was also seen as a significant constraint. Limited and short-term funding was observed to have some risk-related effects, such as precarious contracts for key staff, with counterparts informing the evaluation team that some UN Women staff actively engaged in searching for other jobs while implementing UN Women programming. As some offices rely on a single HA staff member, these uncertain contracts put UN Women's portfolio at risk should the staff member leave the organization.

⁸⁵ The CERF did not collect this type of data prior to 2018.

FIGURE 19:
HACRO Structure



*Vacancy

Funding limitations were also cited as one reason for limited monitoring. In 2017, the Mozambique Country Office reported that “According to available data, humanitarian action in Mozambique ... was not officially carried out under the adoption of gender equality commitments. Due to lack of human and financial resources dedicated to Humanitarian Action, in 2017 the CO has not received or implemented activities in the outcome, limiting itself to observation and light advocacy.”⁸⁶ With regards to the adequacy of resources, the survey is somewhat inconclusive, with just over half (52 per cent) citing funding as a limiting factor.

In terms of communication and decision-making, there are formal organigrammes and the directive for HACRO to communicate through Regional Offices to

⁸⁶ UN Women Mozambique Country Office (2018). “UN Women Mozambique 2017 Annual Report.”

avoid overloading other country-level staff. The evaluation team was informed that bi-weekly or monthly team meetings should take place between New York and Geneva, although respondents stated that these meetings tended to focus on updates of activities rather than opportunities to share knowledge and emerging best practices.

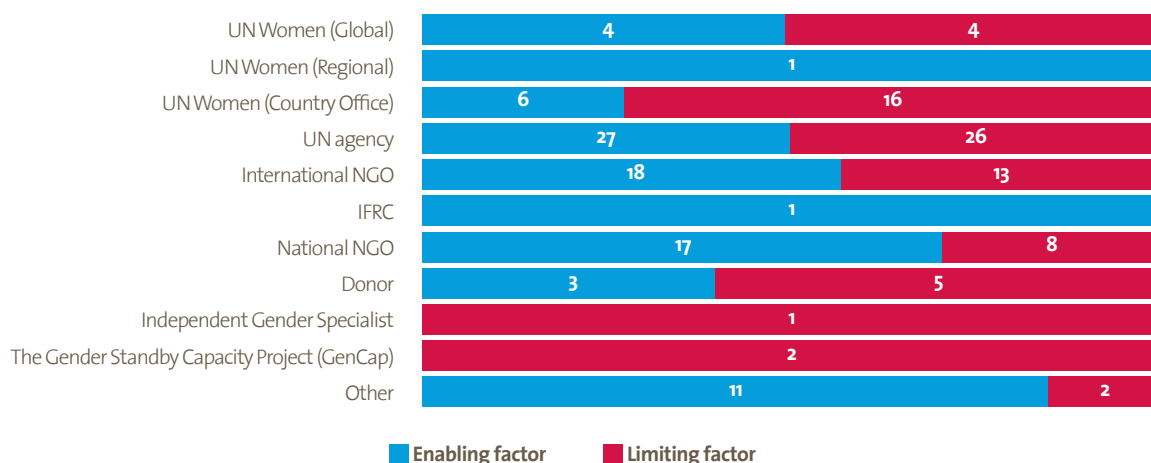
As noted in other sections, the UN Women RMS does not include categories and results data procedures that are aligned with HA. This makes it difficult for management to have an accurate overview of its work and limits UN Women’s ability to learn and share knowledge.

While formally under the RMS it may not be possible to avoid some of these challenges, it should be possible to ensure that relevant information feeds into a system that allows UN Women to have a clear understanding of its overall contribution to HA.

FIGURE 20:

Is UN Women’s internal human capacity an enabling or limiting factor in its contributions to humanitarian action?

(Survey Question)



FINDING 9:

UN Women expertise in humanitarian action remains limited and skills vary significantly from office to office, hampering the Entity’s ability to deliver consistently. Establishing UN Women as a reliable humanitarian actor will require a systematic investment in humanitarian capacity across the organization to allow staff to provide clear, practical and evidence-based normative standards (guidance) and to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment are incorporated in an effective, consistent and practical manner to better serve the needs of women and girls.

The corporate evaluation of UN Women’s contribution to UN system coordination on GEWE⁸⁷ highlighted the need for increased capacity and the importance of investing in building the expertise of staff for credibility, particularly when the organization is not bringing resources to

87 Rojas K., Byron G., Picard M., Micaro E., Gonzales J., Wihry K. & Lankester K. (2016). “Corporate evaluation of UN Women’s contribution to UN system coordination on gender equality and women’s empowerment.” UN Women Independent Evaluation Office. Page 20 <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/5/evaluation-of-un-women-s-contribution-to-un-system-coordination>

the table and is instead relying completely on its staff’s skills to position the Entity.

The evaluation’s portfolio review identified other examples. In 2014, the GenCap mission to Colombia identified the need to deepen the gender-responsive humanitarian work of the UNCT, but also acknowledged that “UN Women lacks core capacity to respond to this need.”⁸⁸ In the evaluation’s mission to Colombia, many stated that this situation had not really improved since 2014. In South Sudan, a compelling strategy is in place to engage with and influence coordination structures in the country. However, the key staff involved are on short-term consulting contracts. The fact that most humanitarian posts are non-core and offer little security means that the most thoughtful strategies are unlikely to be sustained (see Table 1 in Section 2.2).

In the evaluation’s self-assessment, five of the six regional humanitarian advisers reported that the limited capacity of staff is a barrier to ensuring coordination mechanisms at the country level are gender sensitive. This was confirmed further by survey respondents, with more than 60 per cent of the responses from UN Women Country Offices and donors rating internal human capacity as a limiting factor, and 50 per cent of UN agency and UN Women (global) respondents saying the same.

88 UN Women Colombia 2014 RMS Report.

This was also confirmed in stakeholder interviews. Many staff at the country level reported that they had limited experience in HA and that increased capacity would be needed to adequately support all their functions.

One possible exception was in terms of expertise at the normative level, where most respondents agreed that UN Women has the right skills in place. However, the current gap at the political/Chief level in New York was raised by various stakeholders, both within and outside UN Women, and was seen as hindering the effectiveness of the GRG, which is now managed from Geneva, as well as affecting the Entity's ability to adequately engage with other stakeholders in New York.

There has been no analysis of the best mix of permanent/short-term contracts, roles and responsibilities, and competencies compared with needs, opportunities and longer-term strategic objectives. Within the framework of limited financial resources, and reliance on non-core financial resources, it has been observed that the alignment between the level of need and staff available is not always clear. Similarly, in terms of office configuration and within the financial environment, when looking at the five largest humanitarian crises in 2018 (based on size of HRP), three of the five countries only have a UN Women programme presence and not a Country Office. Respondents from field missions frequently cited insufficient capacity as a reason for not participating regularly in coordination mechanisms, and Country Offices often had to limit their participation to one or two clusters/sectors, thereby limiting their ability to influence the overall response.

The type/quality of contracts for staff varied among the countries visited, with some raising concerns about the potential risks to office activities and sustainability. In one instance, partners shared that UN Women staff would regularly enquire about vacancies in other agencies. As mentioned, this is particularly concerning as in some offices the entire humanitarian portfolio relies on one person. The type/quality of contracts also has an impact on staff's ability to benefit from training, as well as the Entity's ability to benefit from their expertise (as only staff can be part of the surge roster and many humanitarian personnel are not staff members, this significantly limits the quality of the surge capacity).

The importance of having key core humanitarian staff to position UN Women was made evident in South Sudan where, despite having been present in the humanitarian sphere since 2014, most stakeholders recognized the recent changes in staff – with a short injection from HACRO followed by the positioning of a strong HA staff member and a country representative with a clear strategy – as having made a significant difference in positioning UN Women as a humanitarian actor.

Overall, there is limited in-depth expertise for HA within UN Women, and capacity within Country Offices varies significantly, which negatively impacts UN Women's ability to respond in an effective and consistent manner. To address this, UN Women needs to have a better understanding of its existing capacity (across all personnel) and have clarity on the minimum requirements (competencies) for a Country Office to be able to engage effectively in humanitarian programming.

FINDING 10:

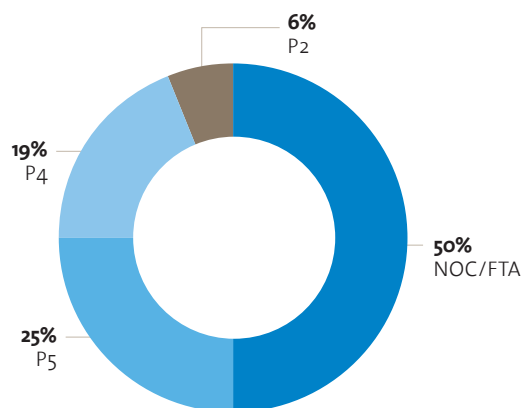
While efforts have been made to set up an internal surge roster, it is still not fit for purpose. UN Women is exploring options for surge capacity, including opening the roster up to a wider network of people and to include programme staff not on temporary assignment or short-term contracts. Profile identification, such as head of office/policy specialist should include skills specific to the context and/or crisis, for example, disaster in small island states and population flow.

The surge capacity roster was established in June 2018. In 2017, guidance documents were finalized following a series of external (UNDP and UNFPA) and internal consultations (Peace and Security, HR, HACRO). The roster includes only UN Women staff members which, at the time of the evaluation, amounted to a total of 13 persons (see Figure 21)

Interviewees raised questions about the level of expertise of the staff in the roster and highlighted difficulties in securing their release, even though

FIGURE 21:
Distribution of staff in roster by category

(Source: HACRO)



managers have to agree for a staff member to be part of the roster. Not all staff interviewed were aware of the surge roster. Some degree of familiarization to ensure that Country Offices understand what resources are available to them may be warranted.

The roster includes experienced and senior staff members at P5 and P4 levels. The selection criteria were comprehensive, and the selection committee panel ensured that only those with adequate experience in humanitarian response (alongside the expertise required for each profile) were included in the roster. The roster is currently limited to staff members, and does not exclude more experienced staff as a result.

At the time of the call for applications, in addition to email notifications to all staff from HR, HR and HACRO jointly led a series of information sessions for interested applicants. The first year of the roster was a pilot effort, so there was limited focus on advertising the roster services. Nevertheless, all presentations to Regional and Country Offices have included deployments as a service line to communicate the availability of this form of support.

It should be noted that the roster isn't always the first choice to recruit personnel for immediate needs in HA. The goal is not to have the same or a higher number of deployments from the roster instead of through Gender Standby Capacity Project SCP. For instance, a

new memorandum of understanding with the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency was signed in 2018. UN Women and RedR, an existing partner, have recently engaged in a series of conversations to further strengthen this engagement. A new partnership with the Netherlands is also being initiated. Additionally, deployments through the roster have a cost implication which SCP deployments do not have. Roster deployments are meant to be for shorter periods compared to SCP deployments, which are on average at least six months duration. The two deployments are not meant to serve the same purpose.

Some of the Regional or Subregional Offices, such as the Multi-Country Office (MCO) in Fiji, have created their own subregional roster and rely on this and the Regional Office for surge support. These rosters have the advantage that those who participate are familiar with the context and are better able to "hit the ground running." Similarly, the Fiji and Barbados MCOs rely on each other for support as they are facing similar challenges as small island states. Regional roster support was also established and rolled out by the Asia-Pacific Regional Office from 2015 following the Nepal earthquake and has been functional since then with deployments of staff from the Regional Office and in the region as part of crisis responses in Fiji, PNG, Indonesia, Laos and Bangladesh, among others, for quicker regional level surge deployments, not operating through the formal headquarters led roster. This highlights the need to go beyond identifying profile types (such as head of office, policy specialist, programme specialist, gender and HA adviser) and extending the scope to familiarity with certain types of contexts (DRR, migration flows, small island states, etc.).

Five deployments from HACRO were also reported to support programme proposals. These were sometimes initiated from HACRO and at other times directly by Country Offices. UN Women also uses GenCap, Norcap and NRC. Table 8 illustrates a range of capacities and roles.

The evaluation was made aware that other options (such as joining the UNDP roster) were continuing to be explored.

TABLE 8:**Overview of the deployments through SCP for 2017** (Source: HACRO)

No.	Entity	Receiving Office	Grade	Start Date	End Date	Number of months in 2017
1	GenCap	UNW Bangladesh	P5	21/07/2017	03/02/2019	5
2	GenCap	UNW OCHA Ukraine	P5	18/01/2017	17/07/2017	7
3	GenCap	UNW OCHA Ukraine	P5	17/08/2017	16/02/2018	4
4	GenCap	UNW Cameroon	P5	03/07/2017	03/01/2018	5
5	GenCap	UNW Cameroon	P5	01/01/2017	02/01/2017	1
6	GenCap	UNW Cameroon	P5	15/02/2017	14/06/2017	4
7	GenCap	UNW OCHA Myanmar	P5	04/12/2017	31/05/2018	1
8	RedR	UNW HQ NY	P3	DD/10/2016	DD/03/2017	3
9	RedR	UNW Fiji	P3	19/01/2017	16/07/2017	6
10	RedR	UNW Fiji	P3	09/11/2017	08/02/2018	2
11	RedR	UNW Fiji	P3	09/11/2017	08/02/2018	1
12	RedR	UNW Sierra Leone	P3	DD/10/2017	DD/01/2018	3
13	NorCap	UNW Iraq	P4	19/08/2017	27/02/2018	4
14	NorCap	UNW Somalia	P3	01/10/2017	31/12/2017	3
15	NRC	UNW Libya	P3	01/11/2017	02/04/2018	2

FINDING 11:

There is no systematic method to extract learning from the field level and feed it back into normative work at the regional and global levels. Rather, the focus is more on reporting activities than on learning. However, UN Women finds ways to drive learning through different types of exercises such as annual reporting on results in humanitarian action and crisis response.

UN Women's approach to knowledge management includes reporting from County Offices and thematic research. The main reporting mechanism is RMS. In assessing and using this system for the evaluation, the team found there were inconsistencies in how humanitarian activities are classified and reported. Some DRR work was categorized as climate change, while livelihood support and GBV activities were

categorized as both humanitarian and development, in different places and in different ways.⁸⁹

Formal reporting is supported through specific exercises, such as thematic reports and various evaluations. These include a "Humanitarian Programme Report: Focus on Livelihoods" (Aug. 2018, Cameroon); "GBV and Child Protection amongst Syrian Refugees with a focus on early marriage" (2013 Jordan); and "The effect of gender equality programming on humanitarian outcomes" (2015). Other formal reporting includes donor reports (such as for CERF or the WHPF), along with the HACRO annual report.

While some weaknesses were identified in data management, as described above, the evaluation team noted efforts for better data management, such as the HACRO survey and internal tools that allow it to better understand UN Women's work on the ground, e.g. through self-reporting surveys.

⁸⁹ The Evaluation Inception Phase Report includes additional information on these inconsistencies.

FIGURE 22:

The humanitarian principles

<p>Humanity Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.</p>	<p>Neutrality Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.</p>	<p>Impartiality Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.</p>	<p>Independence Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.</p>
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Lessons learned are also reported as part of RMS. The quality and consistency of these vary.

UN Women has undertaken a series of exercises to promote learning and share knowledge in specific areas. In 2015, and in the context of the GRG, UN Women commissioned the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex to undertake a study of “The effect of gender equality programming on humanitarian outcomes.” This provided evidence of how gender equality programming is essential to ensure an effective, inclusive, rights-based humanitarian response. A full list of relevant knowledge products produced can be found in Annex 15. The UN Women Country Office in Nepal developed a lesson learning document from the earthquake and flood responses, which was used to inform emergency response preparedness planning in Bangladesh.

Despite these efforts, there does not seem to be a systematic mechanism to support the sharing of knowledge and lessons learned. It mostly occurs on an ad hoc basis or for specific reports, such as donor reports and HACRO annual reports. There have also been regional forums for sharing knowledge, such as that between the Barbados and Fiji MCOs.

The limited allocation of resources for monitoring is also detrimental to UN Women’s effectiveness as it limits the quality and consistency of the evidence available for management decision-making.

In Cameroon, only two monitoring visits were permitted per programme – at the beginning and at the end of programmes. The Country Office stated this was insufficient as it had prevented the office from adapting the programme during the implementation phase based on changing needs or identified gaps.

Finally, reports data tends to be less informative as they focus on output level indicators. The number of women attending a training session does not indicate to what degree that learning had a lasting impact. This weakness has been highlighted in other corporate evaluations: “A weak knowledge management function hampers the organization from extracting useful lessons, establishing active communities of practice and being a learning organization.”⁹⁰

The systems for sharing knowledge are a focus area of the ongoing change management workstreams. This includes systems-based approaches to organizational development that go beyond what is typically available in most UN organizations. It is also very data driven, including qualitative and quantitative data, that could highlight both positive and negative trends in near “real time.”

⁹⁰ Tzavaras Catsambas T., Bourne K., Fox L., Carden F., Simmons K. (2016). “Corporate Evaluation of the Regional Architecture of UN Women.” UN Women Independent Evaluation Office.

The evaluation found examples that risked doing unintended harm and highlighted the need to strengthen capacity building in this domain, including humanitarian principles. The online training provided by UN Women on HA does not sufficiently offer guidance on how to operationalize these principles.⁹¹

Working along the humanitarian–development nexus, UN Women’s work with the government in Cameroon was raised, given the government’s practices and interests and the need to advocate against *refoulement* of refugees and independence and impartiality in the Anglophone regions. In Colombia, referral pathways for GBV survivors identified formal institutional structures as opposed to a more survivor-centred and protection-oriented approach.

More broadly, a significant number of evaluation respondents raised questions as to whether UN Women’s approach to HA challenged the humanitarian principle of independence, as the Entity often chose to partner with governments when implementing programmes. This was raised in Bangladesh in relation to UN Women organizing training of police officers on GBV responses in Cox’s Bazar, despite the GBV sub-sector having referral and response pathways in place that didn’t involve the police, due to the precarious status and limited access to justice of the Rohingya community. A similar concern was raised regarding perceived independence issues in the UN Women Somalia Country Office and HCT participation. The government is often part and party to conflicts and expecting affected populations to access the national police for assistance, such as in the case of the Gender Desks, is ill-advised.

3.7 Gender equality and human rights

How has UN Women’s humanitarian work addressed the underlying causes of gender inequality and discrimination?

⁹¹ As an example, the training assumes that the government will first and foremost want to respond to HA based on needs and that UN Women will support authorities in this process.

FINDING 12:

UN Women’s approach to humanitarian action demonstrates how the underlying dynamics in a crisis affect women and girls to increase their vulnerability, impact their resilience and undermine their ability to access and/or benefit from humanitarian assistance. UN Women’s normative work is based on addressing these underlying causes and often draws not only from global research, but also from its experience with civil society and governments. UN Women can expand on this work, finding ways to bring these actors into every aspect of a response. This is aligned with the New Ways of Working and is an essential way to ensure that gender equality and women’s empowerment and the needs of women and girls are considered not only in terms of effectiveness, but also from a rights perspective.

The human rights-based approach to programming (HRBAP) is conceptually embedded in UN Women’s approach. It aims to move away from seeing women as victims (or potential victims), in line with the traditional humanitarian response, and focuses on women’s agency and empowerment as a protection mechanism, understanding how targeting the response at the remedial action level can prevent a repeat of the abuse.

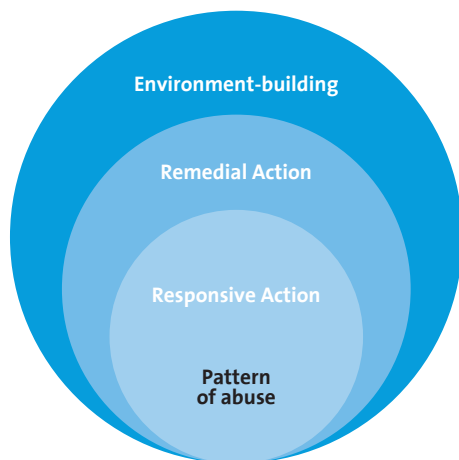
With human rights acting as the “bridge” across phases of the crisis and aligning early response with the nexus, “every humanitarian operation can benefit from human rights work, which addresses root causes of a crisis and therefore contributes to building a comprehensive response and enhance peace and security for all.”⁹²

However, the evaluation team observed that many humanitarian actors still don’t understand the role that UN Women can play in relation to rights-based approaches. Humanitarian actors

⁹² Danish Refugee Council International Department Policy Unit. “The Rights Based Approach.” <https://drc.ngo/media/1204873/drc-rights-based-approach-folder.pdf>

FIGURE 23:
The Protection Egg

(Source: Danish Refugee Council)



were largely unaware of how to communicate the importance of humanitarian programming that is responsive to underlying power dynamics. This advocacy work is essential to identify and reach the most vulnerable in an effective manner and is very much linked to the principle of respect and dignity that goes with saving lives.

The evaluation identified various examples of how humanitarian actors appreciate having access to this type of analysis. In Colombia, UN Women developed a profile of the Venezuelan women at the border that was often mentioned by various counterparts. Similarly, ALDEPA, an NGO that traditionally works on prevention of juvenile delinquency, partnered with UN Women to assist at the Minawao camp in Cameroon. As noted in interviews, this joint work allowed ALDEPA to understand how women and girls were affected differently, the reasons they may choose to join Boko Haram, and how and why even humanitarian actors, if not careful, can cause additional harm to women.

FINDING 13:

UN Women’s contributions to humanitarian action, especially at the normative level, are informed by human rights-based approaches. UN Women’s work has promoted greater transparency and accountability for these approaches.

Humanitarian crises, including disasters, conflicts and pandemics, often result in a deterioration of human rights. “The adoption of a human rights-based approach safeguards affected people by empowering them.”⁹³ The key elements of the HA based approach include transparency, accountability, capacity development of the rights holders to be able to monitor and advocate for their rights, as well as inclusiveness (participation) in the process in a non-discriminatory manner.⁹⁴ A human-rights based approach would be mindful to include the most vulnerable and excluded from humanitarian protection and assistance, proactively seeking to reduce contextual discrimination and control any possible politicization in the distribution of aid.⁹⁵

Through its normative work, UN Women has advocated for and sought to strengthen transparency and accountability, especially as it relates to gender, in humanitarian responses. Capacity building of duty-bearers aims to strengthen their abilities so that they are better equipped to meet their legal obligations under international human rights and humanitarian laws.

Similarly, LEAP builds on the concept of empowerment, be it through skills training, education and cash programmes, or by providing women with skills and access to cash/employment. These types of activities address the power imbalance that is at the root of women’s vulnerabilities at times of crisis. Many examples of this have been cited throughout this evaluation.

The evaluation also identified examples of how UN Women has addressed the issue of patriarchy and other male-dominated social structures that contribute to girls and women’s vulnerabilities. For instance, each and every livelihood activity assessed as part of the evaluation sought to give women income opportunities and to work in sectors traditionally uncommon for women. This not only addresses immediate needs, but also challenges dominant patriarchal structures.

93 Maria Giovanna Pietropaolo (2016) “A Human Rights-Based Approach to Humanitarian Assistance,” *Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies*; Volume 7, Issue 2.

94 Robert F Kennedy Center for Justice & Human Rights et al. “A Call for Human Rights-Based Approach to Humanitarian Assistance for Haiti.”

95 OHCHR. “Protecting human rights in humanitarian crises.” OHCHR in humanitarian action. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/HumanitarianAction/Pages/Crises.aspx>.

FIGURE 24:
Key elements of the rights-based approach as they apply to HA

(Source: Dara)



Similarly, women’s safe spaces provide protection and address issues around access stemming from societal norms, as mentioned previously. Legal support projects, such as in Iraq, and awareness-raising and advocacy initiatives linked to GBV from across the UN Women portfolio aim to address the underlying causes of gender inequality. These examples include a prominent focus on working with religious and community leaders towards a greater acceptance of women’s rights within communities.

While these examples are positive, there is scope for more capacity work in this area. When it comes to capacity building of rights holders, which is at the core of the rights-based approach,⁹⁶ the evaluation team observed a focus on governments in comparison with civil society. This was demonstrated in programme designs and products. For example, the *hoja de ruta* in Colombia, a roadmap for GBV survivors, identified the existing institutional pathway rather than prioritizing the needs of the survivor. While strengthening the capacities of duty bearers is important, UN Women could more consistently focus on strengthening the capacities of women’s groups and civil society while promoting their participation in decision-making.

⁹⁶ UN Women (2017). “Thematic evaluation of UN Women’s humanitarian action in the Arab states’ region.”

FINDING 14:

While UN Women has not historically worked specifically with women with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) communities in humanitarian contexts, the evaluation noted examples of how UN Women could ensure that normative and coordination work considers these rights holders in humanitarian action.

The Yogyakarta Principles (2006, 2017) on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity⁹⁷ affirm equal rights for people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE).⁹⁸ Many of UN Women’s normative and legal frameworks do not explicitly refer to SOGIE. However, gender equality goes beyond sex to include the social/cultural construct around gender and as such implicitly recognizes the need to include persons beyond the gender binary of women, girls, boys and men in order to also integrate LGBTQI+ people, and thus further emphasize the principle of leaving no one behind.

As with the underlying causes of gender inequality and discrimination, these issues affect the adequacy of the response and the ability of the most vulnerable to benefit from humanitarian programming. For example, following the mudslide in Mocoa, Colombia, government shelters failed to find an adequate solution for the transsexual community. Together with other UN agencies, UN Women alerted the *Defensoría del Pueblo (The Ombudsman’s Office)* of this gap in the response. As part of the Asia-Pacific Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group, UN Women also supported the Asia-Pacific Pride “call for action” that convened LGBTQI+ to document cases of discrimination and heightened vulnerabilities during a humanitarian response.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ TGEU (2018). “The Yogyakarta Principles: How International Human Rights Protect LGBTI People.” <https://tgeu.org/yogyakarta-principles/>.

⁹⁸ Also referred to as LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer)

⁹⁹ SOGIES Asia and the Pacific (2018). “Pride in the Humanitarian System - Call for Action.” <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/asia/document/pride-humanitarian-system-call-action>

FIGURE 25:
Issues associated with discrimination in aid

Source: OCHA



In some instances, respondents described how government entities have objected to UN Women’s work with these groups. This highlights some of the challenges associated with placing the vulnerable population – and not government – at the centre of the response. At the same time, the evaluation recognizes that UN Women is a smaller actor with limited resources and has no history of working with LGBTQI+ communities.

The IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action (2015) developed with the support of UN Women in the context of the IASC Gender Working Group is, together with the UNHCR Emergency Handbook (2015), one of the very few handbooks/guidance that addresses LGBTQI+ communities in any significant manner.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ ADPC, OCHA, UN Women; (2017). “Gender in Humanitarian Action Asia Pacific Working Group.” Integrating Gender into Humanitarian Action: Good Practices from Asia-Pacific 6.

There are a number of examples of UN Women’s work with LGBTQI+ communities. UN Women Fiji MCO worked in partnership with Diverse Voices and Action for Equality (DIVA for Equality),¹⁰¹ and led a session at the Pacific Humanitarian Partnership meeting on local and diverse humanitarian actors, including speakers from the Rainbow Pride Foundation, to assess the specific needs and benefits of inclusion. UN Women is providing leadership in this area in the

¹⁰¹ DIVA for Equality Diverse Voices for Action and Equality (DIVA for Equality) concentrates its work in urban poor communities, rural and remote constituencies, and with women and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities and expression, as well as wider women-led social organizing in Pacific small island states. DIVA for Equality co-convenes a regional Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Coalition (PPGCCSD); We Rise Coalition (with femlink PACIFIC, FWRM and IWDA); the Pacific Feminist SRHR Coalition; and is a founder/on the Working Group of new Pacific CSO Engagement Mechanism (PACCOM), etc. DIVA for Equality is also the Women’s Major Group PSIDS Organizing Partner (2017-2019) and the Women and Gender Constituency (WGC) Liaison to the UNFCCC COP23 Presidency.

FIGURE 26:

First ever gay rights parade in East Timor Source: UN Women / Felix Maia



Source: UN Women/Felix Maia

context of the protection cluster, coordinating protection, preparedness and response across the Pacific, specifically in relation to SOGIE. This was reported as a first for UN Women globally and recognized as a good practice.

Other vulnerabilities linked to race, caste or religion benefit from UN Women's continued country presence which allows a better understanding of the cultural dynamics and how they impact women and girls in humanitarian contexts. An example of this is the market stall supported in Cameroon that sought to provide Muslim women with access to the market, which is not culturally regarded as acceptable, by providing them with a physical barrier that provided both protection from harassment as well as cultural protection. These limitations were not always taken into consideration, e.g. in Nigeria where the opposite occurred and women were not able to access the markets.


A good example of programming with substantive support from the indigenous population was observed in Colombia where women from indigenous and afro-descendant groups were invited to participate in developing a culturally-sensitive institutional response to GBV in the context of the armed conflict. When interviewed, the women underscored their appreciation of UN Women's method of partnership, which had allowed them to participate in a substantive manner and was fully respectful of their own practices.

The experience in Fiji with SOGIE communities and in Colombia with indigenous groups shows that while UN Women has not historically worked in these areas, and does not necessarily have in-house expertise, strategic partnering can lead to positive change. Through its normative and coordination work, UN Women can ensure that data disaggregation incorporates SOGIE, disabilities and other relevant information, such as ethnic or religious groups (when contextually relevant).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are organized by criteria. This includes the “triangulation marker” that indicates the type and strength of different evidentiary sources (see Section 2.8).

4.1 Relevance




CONCLUSION 1

UN Women helps to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women remains central to humanitarian action.

GEWE is largely recognized as an important factor to achieve effective humanitarian action. Most stakeholders consulted in the context of this evaluation noted UN Women’s normative, coordination and programming work as relevant to HA. They also recognized how GEWE contributes to more sustained humanitarian outcomes and longer-term transformative change. However, the relationship between UN Women’s normative, coordination and programming work and the wider role that the Entity plays in HA was not always clear. Therefore, some stakeholders see smaller-scale, country-level programming as the entirety of UN Women’s contribution in a specific response, thus missing how UN Women also informs important coordination and normative work.

4.2 Appropriateness



CONCLUSION 2

Stronger links are needed between UN Women’s global normative work and humanitarian coordination mechanisms where needs and priorities are determined.

Over the last five years, UN Women has been involved in, and has often been instrumental to, all major international and regional forums concerning humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction. This engagement has provided a foundation for making links to response-specific coordination mechanisms that define the needs of women and girls and other vulnerable groups. Such coordination mechanisms include the Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan processes, United Nations Humanitarian Country Teams, humanitarian clusters and sectors, and inter-cluster working groups. However, a consistent, early and strategic presence in country-level coordination mechanisms is needed to establish the vital links between UN Women’s global normative work and effective humanitarian action to ensure that the needs of women and girls are appropriately addressed in humanitarian contexts.

4.3 Connectedness and sustainability

CONCLUSION 3

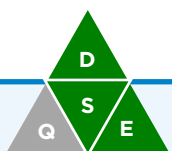
UN Women should continue to build on its “development” work while increasing its focus on the “humanitarian” side of the nexus.



UN Women’s global normative work has provided a foundation for activities that are closer to the development side of the humanitarian–development nexus. This could lead humanitarian stakeholders to view UN Women solely as a development actor, thus decreasing the Entity’s opportunities to influence humanitarian and other actors in their work to support women and girls in emergencies, and as they integrate GEWE into their programmes. UN Women could have a greater impact by ensuring that: a system-wide response is gender sensitive from the beginning; the Entity addresses underlying power dynamics; programming considers possible risks and backlash to women’s participation; and barriers to access are addressed. These actions are all closer to the humanitarian side of the nexus and also facilitate links to UN Women’s global normative work.

CONCLUSION 4

Working in partnership can ensure that UN Women makes contributions at sufficient scale while increasing opportunities for funding.



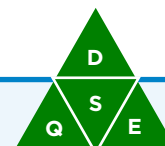
United Nations organizations are generally enthusiastic about engaging with UN Women, which has emerged from the partnerships that UN Women has forged to date. However, in the future, partnerships could be more central to how UN Women works in terms of specific responses. Partnerships with OCHA, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP, among others, could enable UN Women to contribute to developing effective gender equality and women’s empowerment

approaches, while creating a channel for these to be implemented at scale. This is important as UN Women’s programming currently tends to be at a smaller scale, meaning its efficacy and relevance is difficult to appraise. Working in partnership and at scale would be an effective way to demonstrate results, inform global policy and increase the inclination and capacity of donors to fund similar approaches and partnerships in other humanitarian responses.

4.4 Effectiveness

CONCLUSION 5

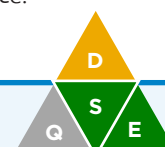
There is significant evidence that UN Women has been highly effective in its global normative work.



There are several examples of how UN Women has worked to integrate gender equality and women’s empowerment into frameworks and policies that guide humanitarian action. The evaluation could not identify any relevant international forum or event in which UN Women was absent in the last five years. The examples provided throughout the evaluation indicated that UN Women was not merely present, but also ensured that issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment were incorporated into key normative frameworks and guidance.

CONCLUSION 6

Lessons from UN Women’s country level work should serve to improve programming approaches globally and act as a catalyst for longer-term transformative change.



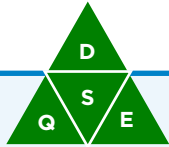
UN Women lacks systematic methods to effectively extract and document learning from specific humanitarian responses. While this is typical of many international organizations, it is of particular importance for UN Women as it supports programming that addresses immediate needs, pathways to recovery and longer-term transformative change. A

systematic and consistent approach to appraise and extract lessons on how different actors incorporate a gender lens into humanitarian activities – either independently or because of direct UN Women support – would not only continue to build the case for investment in gender equality and women’s empowerment, but would also provide a compendium of best and emerging practices that could be replicated and brought to scale in other responses.

4.5 Efficiency

CONCLUSION 7

UN Women’s reliance on non-core resources tends to make it more reactive and less strategic, and therefore less efficient overall.



With non-core resources comprising around 95 per cent of UN Women’s humanitarian funding, the Entity is mostly “supply driven”. This means that UN Women is largely reliant on project-level funding and opportunities, which affects its ability to be more coherent and strategic at the global level.

CONCLUSION 8

UN Women’s capacity and expertise in humanitarian action vary across offices, risking UN Women’s ability to deliver consistently.

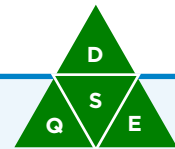


As seen from other organizations’ experiences, becoming established as a reliable humanitarian actor requires commitment in terms of sufficient humanitarian capacity across the organization. Current corporate systems do not facilitate UN Women’s understanding of what type of humanitarian-related expertise it has available and where it can be found. A team of dedicated staff that could be deployed in the earliest stages of a response would help to ensure the implementation of a strategic and consistent humanitarian approach. Ideally, this team would include three to seven staff members with experience from multiple humanitarian responses who have a deep understanding of humanitarian coordination and appeal mechanisms.

4.6 Gender equality and human rights

CONCLUSION 9

UN Women’s work exemplifies gender equality and human rights approaches.



Overall, UN Women’s approach to humanitarian action demonstrates an understanding of how dynamics in a crisis can affect women and girls by increasing their vulnerability and impacting their resilience, which ultimately undermines their ability to benefit from humanitarian action.

5. LESSONS

There are a number of lessons that can be derived from the evaluation's findings, analysis and conclusions. Some of the more salient include those noted below.

Coordination is resource intensive. Adequate coordination requires a significant investment of time. Staff should have a sufficient level of expertise, authority to make decisions quickly and time to engage with actors across the HCT and other coordination mechanisms.

Credibility is crucial. UN Women needs to be strategic and consistent to ensure that humanitarian actors understand UN Women's role and to increase its credibility overall. A strong humanitarian team, even small, can have a significant impact on UN Women's ability to influence a response.

UN Women has a key competitive advantage in promoting the role of civil society throughout a response. Civil society plays an important role in both contextualizing a response and in ensuring that humanitarian activities can be sustained after most of the humanitarian actors have left. UN Women is often involved with such actors before, during and after a response. Promoting their importance throughout will contribute to much greater and sustained effectiveness.

Connectedness needs to be considered from the design stage. Risks and opportunities associated with weak implementing partners' absorptive capacity need to be considered from the design stage in a realistic manner. Similarly, activities in the context of a camp require clear alignment with

other actors in the camp and need to be part of the initial planning architecture.

Seconding UN Women staff to OCHA and other partners is a good foundation for broader partnership. Experiences of seconding UN Women staff to OCHA, as in Yemen and for the World Humanitarian Summit, has led to tangible results, especially in an increased recognition and understanding of GEWE as instrumental to effective HA. This provides a foundation for even more meaningful and expansive levels of engagement.

Resource mobilization with humanitarian donors requires a different, more strategic approach. UN Women has an opportunity to move beyond programme funding and towards strategic partnerships with donors that are pushing their partners to become better on GEWE issues. This will require practical and demonstrable programmes, at scale, that prove the benefits of GEWE in relation to immediate needs, recovery and longer-term transformative change. This may be achieved, most practically, through partnership. UN Women could also follow OCHA's model of using the country based pooled funds to convene different actors during a response. If UN Women supported local actors in developing proposals that exemplified the best aspects of GEWE, this would lead to an increasing role for UN Women with OCHA and in relation to the localization agenda.

Developing a coherent vision requires time. Successful implementation and the delivery of results are connected to a robust analytical basis and a detailed and inclusive design process.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the evaluation's findings and conclusions. Each recommendation is rated according to priority (**valuable**, **important** and **urgent**) and time frame (**longer term**, **medium term** and **short term**). Unless otherwise indicated, all assume HACRO as the primary responsible party.

RECOMMENDATION 1

UN Women should develop a response-level strategy to complement its global Humanitarian Strategy.

(Urgent: short term)

A response-level strategy should provide specific approaches and standard operating procedures for engaging with and influencing: coordination mechanisms (Humanitarian Country Teams, Humanitarian Needs Overview/Humanitarian Response Plans); resource mobilization strategies within and beyond coordinated appeals; key partnerships/joint programming opportunities; and approaches to ensure knowledge management and learning.

UN Women should establish criteria to define its field-level engagement, considering the level of need, capacity and inter-agency agreement. UN Women's most important contribution to humanitarian action could be in helping operationalize guidance and bridging policy and practice. UN Women could also better track financing and results in programmes that specifically target women and girls to strengthen accountability.

To be a credible actor, UN Women needs to be predictable to better serve women and girls in humanitarian settings. This requires the Entity to commit to what it will do in crises (what, when and how). The decision on what to prioritize should

be informed by humanitarian needs, UN Women's comparative advantages and gaps in the system-wide response.

Recommendation 1.1: *UN Women should review its humanitarian strategy and develop a complementary and detailed resource mobilization strategy to leverage opportunities at the country level (Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plans) and with key donors.*

UN Women may need to revise its HACRO Humanitarian Strategy based on a revised theory of change and develop a resource mobilization strategy that is coherent with these priorities and effective humanitarian action.

Recommendation 1.2: *UN Women should conduct internal annual reviews of gender in humanitarian action/gender equality and the empowerment of women in humanitarian action to analyse how strategies are contributing to demonstrable results.*

This could include assessing changes in coordination; the adoption and use of proven approaches and models; and strengthening leadership, accountability and technical capacity in relation to GEWE.

RECOMMENDATION 2

UN Women should identify the necessary leadership, minimum levels of staffing and office structures in humanitarian settings for an adequate response-level strategy in humanitarian action to ensure that the Entity can maximize its influence at the country level.

(Important: medium term)

UN Women’s humanitarian capacity should therefore be central to relevant parts of the Entity’s management and administration systems. This would include expanding and strengthening training on humanitarian principles, Gender in Humanitarian Action, humanitarian coordination, the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, Accountability to Affected Populations, Communications with Communities, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, and Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. Management and humanitarian staff would benefit from guidance on how to engage with humanitarian donors and strategic partners.

 **RECOMMENDATION 3**

UN Women has developed important partnerships in different contexts and should build on this experience and focus on developing global partnership frameworks with OCHA, UNHCR and UNFPA.

(Important: longer term)

UN Women should prioritize global partnerships with OCHA and UNHCR which could help to define a core package of services that UN Women could commit to delivering in (predefined) humanitarian contexts. Given their coordination roles, OCHA and UNHCR could then promote this “package” in other responses.

UN Women may continue to clarify and expand its partnership with UNFPA, recognizing each agency’s contribution and how they build on and support each other in emergency contexts. This should go beyond agreements related to GBV referrals, psychosocial support and prevention of GBV, as currently agreed. A memorandum of understanding should be signed between both organizations and guidance should be developed to clearly outline roles and responsibilities of both agencies and in all contexts. A joint team of focal points could be established to travel to selected countries, clarify issues and work collaboratively.

An enhanced partnership with UNICEF could also be considered as there are some understandable overlaps between the two organizations. UN Women should work towards an agreement that illustrates how UN Women and UNICEF complement each other in different humanitarian contexts. This agreement should also provide details of how each organization would lead on issues affecting women and girls.

Recommendation 3 requires that UN Women and corresponding partners such as OCHA, UNHCR and UNFPA mutually engage at the highest level to secure the necessary commitments and sufficient specificity as to what, how and when they will collaborate to guide implementation on the ground.

 **RECOMMENDATION 4**

UN Women should increase its effectiveness and impact in humanitarian action by better linking the Entity’s work to system-wide responses while minimizing programming that is not conducted in partnership or that does not have broader strategic importance.

(Urgent: longer term)

Due to its limited size and scale, UN Women should seek to increase its reach by better linking to system-wide responses, e.g. rolling out the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Accountability Framework on Gender; integrating gender-responsive programming throughout the humanitarian programme cycle; and promoting women and girls’ participation from the initial assessment stage to management, implementation and assessment. From this, UN Women can promote accountability and learning and further focus on enabling outcome-centred response planning and improved Humanitarian Needs Overview/Humanitarian Response Plan processes.

7. ANNEXES

Annexes are provided in a separate document. These include:

- 1. Terms of Reference**
- 2. Inception Phase Report**
- 3. HACRO Organigramme**
- 4. Analytical Framework**
- 5. Evaluation Questions**
- 6. Demographic Information of Evaluation Respondents**
- 7. Demographic Data of Focus Group Discussions**
- 8. Stakeholder Analysis**
- 9. Evaluation Survey Results and Protocol**
- 10. Semi-structured Interview Protocol**
- 11. Self-Assessment Protocol**
- 12. Portfolio Review – High-level findings**
- 13. Enabling and limiting factors (internal and external) that contribute to the achievement of results**
- 14. Partnership Attributes and Enabling Factors**
- 15. List of knowledge products produced by UN Women**
- 16. Revised Theory of Change**
- 17. Bibliography**

Produced by the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services of UN Women (IEAS)

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service is co-located with the Internal Audit Service under the Independent Evaluation and Audit Service. The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service's main purpose is to enhance accountability, inform decision-making, and contribute to learning about the best ways to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment through the organization's mandate, including its normative, operational, and coordination work. The Independent Evaluation Service also works to strengthen capacities for gender-responsive evaluation within UN entities, governments, and civil society organizations.

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UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, 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.



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