IN BRIEF

CORPORATE EVALUATION OF UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT TO

NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

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What was evaluated

Over the last two decades, **UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS)** has been the central framework for addressing challenges faced by women in situations of conflict, along with subsequent supporting resolutions in this area. National Action Plans for implementation of WPS objectives (WPS NAPS) are the main mechanisms by which these global WPS frameworks are translated into concrete strategies, actions and outcomes at national level. Responsibility for implementation of WPS NAPs lies with national governments as outlined in UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions. As of November 2020, 92 UN Member States and territories had adopted a NAP on WPS, while several regional and subregional organizations had also developed Regional Action Plans (RAPs) for implementation of UNSCR 1325.

UN Women plays a pivotal role in forwarding WPS objectives at global, regional and national level. Globally, UN Women provides leadership, knowledge sharing and advocacy on WPS, and coordinates UN system work in this area. At regional level, UN Women supports an enabling environment for regional and subregional organizations to advance WPS objectives. At national level, UN Women supports countries to develop, implement, monitor and review their WPS NAPs, including by providing coordination, technical expertise, guidance and tools, and lessons and best practices.

UN Women makes significant financial investments in the area of WPS, specifically related to work on NAPs. For the period 2015–2019, UN Women's expenditure on its Strategic Output 4.1/4.1.2, '*WPS commitments and accountability frameworks adopted and implemented in conflict and post-conflict situations*', was US$ 88.45 million, while the amount budgeted was US$ 114.29 million. Ninety-six per cent of this funding came from non-core resources.

The evaluation assessed UN Women's support to NAPs development and implementation processes in order to meet WPS commitments and adopt accountability frameworks in conflict and post-conflict countries. Support to WPS NAPs development was assessed through UN Women's interventions, while the assessment of support to the implementation process focused on UN Women's contribution to establishing an enabling environment and processes that allow WPS NAPs to be implemented effectively. Effectiveness was assessed by looking at the extent to which UN Women promoted the five elements identified in the 2015 Global Study on the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as critical for a high-impact NAP that is likely to be implemented and generate change. The five elements were strong leadership and effective coordination; an inclusive design process; costing and allocated budgets for implementation; a monitoring and evaluation framework; and flexibility to adapt to emerging situations.

The evaluation focused on the period 2015–2019 and covered results from the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014–2018 and the first two years of the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan.

How the evaluation was conducted

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

Assess the **relevance** and coherence; **effectiveness** and organizational efficiency; and **sustainability** of UN Women's global, regional and national work to support WPS NAPs development and implementation processes

Analyse how **human rights** perspectives and **gender equality principles** are integrated into UN Women's support to WPS NAPs development and implementation processes
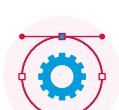
Identify a menu of evidence of **what works and what doesn't** work in terms of UN Women's support to NAPs development and implementation to facilitate choices about future investments

Identify **lessons learned** and provide action-oriented **recommendations** to solidify UN Women's work in this area

In addition to these initial objectives, the evaluation's focus was expanded during the inception phase to include a light-touch assessment of the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for WPS and UN Women's work in this area.

The evaluation was both summative and formative in nature, summarizing information on existing UN Women strategies and offering recommendations for future work.

The evaluation used both quantitative and qualitative analysis, with the evaluation matrix providing an over-arching framework for analysis across all evaluation components. A reconstructed theory of change was developed for UN Women's work on WPS NAPs and was used as the overarching theory to understand how change happens in this area of work. Contribution analysis was used to develop an overall performance story and assess plausible contributions to observed changes. The evaluation was conducted in line with gender equality and human rights principles as set out in the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System.[1] The evaluation used the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations[2] and the UN Women Handbook "How to manage gender-responsive evaluation."[3]

The most significant limitations to the evaluation resulted from the outbreak of COVID-19. COVID-19 related travel restrictions meant that all field missions had to be replaced by virtual case studies. Therefore, it was not possible to conduct the planned focus group discussions with beneficiaries to gather first-hand evidence on the impact of UN Women's work. In addition, the COVID-19 situation meant that not all identified stakeholders were available for interview.

Desk review:
60 countries with analysis and summaries of Annual Work Plans and WPS NAP work

In-depth review:
20 countries and HQ

Virtual case studies in 8 countries:
Afghanistan, BiH, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Guatemala, Mali, Nepal, Uganda - 113 interviews

Virtual case study in HQ: 30 interviews

3 surveys conducted: survey to Country Offices (56% response rate), to Partner Govts/CSOs (39% response rate), and to International Organizations (22% response rate)

Mixed-methods approach: qualitative & quantitative data collection from different data sources

OneApp Dashboard, DAMs, ATLAS and RMS **systems reviewed**

60	20	9	143	3	2
countries reviewed	in-depth country review	virtual case studies	interviews	surveys	Reference groups

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1   UNEG (2017) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (United Nations Evaluation Group).

2   UNEG (2014) Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in evaluations http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1616

3   UN Women (2015) UN Women Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation https://www.UN Womenomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation

What the evaluation concluded

CONCLUSION 1: UN Women's WPS NAP support is strongly grounded in SDGs 5 & 16 and in an understanding of local WPS priorities and contexts, allowing the Entity to advance these global goals in a contextually relevant way.

CONCLUSION 2: UN Women's normative and coordination activities in support of WPS NAPs are the most visible and valued by all stakeholders.

CONCLUSION 3: UN Women engages in external coordination on multiple levels. There is space for strengthening coherence between these levels so that they better support each other.

CONCLUSION 4: UN Women is effective in facilitating national NAP processes that build awareness and consensus and strongly contribute to the adoption of NAPs.

CONCLUSION 5: UN Women supports high-impact criteria for NAPs, but this support does not always translate into effective NAPs due to external challenges.

CONCLUSION 6: UN Women's WPS NAP work contributes to laying the foundations for transformational change. However, the Entity would benefit from a clear Theory of Change (ToC) in this area.

CONCLUSION 7: Given the human and financial resources available for NAP development and implementation, the activities implemented produced satisfactory results.

CONCLUSION 8: Limited internal thematic and organizational coherence in UN Women's support to WPS NAPs has implications for how the Entity reports results and manages knowledge and guidance.

CONCLUSION 9: UN Women recognizes the importance of national ownership of WPS NAPs for their long-term sustainability, and building this ownership is a central element of UN Women's engagement on WPS NAPs.

CONCLUSION 10: Sustainable implementation of WPS NAPs requires meaningful translation to the local level and ensuring adequate funding. UN Women needs a clearer strategy for how it can support such sustainable implementation.

CONCLUSION 11: UN Women has supported COVID-19 responses that take account of WPS issues. There is strong potential for WPS NAP principles and priorities to inform national responses to COVID-19, but so far this is mostly not happening.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

UN Women's WPS NAP support should connect with and scale up a wider range of global normative frameworks, as well as regional frameworks and processes to increase traction.

RECOMMENDATION 2

UN Women should strengthen the synergy between its normative, coordination and operational roles in support of WPS NAPs to enhance its impact. UN Women should strengthen its understanding of how the different roles and intervention strategies it adopts to support NAPs can connect to and build upon each other.

RECOMMENDATION 3

UN Women should devise a strategy to harmonize its external coordination efforts, with a focus on strengthening and linking global, regional and national-level coordination processes.

RECOMMENDATION 4

UN Women should continue to expand its current strategies to support WPS NAP development. It should also define a clear and consistent strategy for support to WPS NAP implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 5

UN Women should strengthen its understanding of how to support transformational shifts in gender equality and women's empowerment, and should use this to inform its work on WPS and NAPs.

RECOMMENDATION 6

WPS management should enhance its internal reporting systems related to tracking financial resources and results towards WPS NAPs to better demonstrate and enhance results. It should also strengthen technical leadership to ensure a harmonized approach to WPS NAP support.

RECOMMENDATION 7

UN Women should expand the range of actors and processes that it engages with on WPS NAPs to broaden and deepen national level ownership and integrate its engagement on WPS NAPs with its other areas of work at the national level to support sustainable NAP implementation.

RECOMMENDATION 8

UN Women should address the immediate need to integrate WPS principles into COVID-19 responses, as well as the longer-term challenge of ensuring that NAPs are used to inform emergency planning

Full Evaluation report available on https://gate.unwomen.org/