



UN Women CAMEROON



**COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION
2018–2020**



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The UN Women Strategic Note 2018–2020 is the result of close collaboration between the Regional Evaluation Specialist, Regional Evaluation Analyst and two Evaluation Consultants, under the coordination of the Independent Evaluation and Audit Services of UN Women.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	African Development Bank
ALVF	Association de Lutte contre les Violences faites aux Femmes-Association, or the Fight Against Violence Against Women
BDEAC	Development Bank of Central African States
BUCREP	Central Bureau of Census and Population Studies
CAMYOSFOP	Cameroon youths and students forum for peace
CAPEC	Cameroon Association for the Protection and Education of the Child
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Group
DRF	Development Result Framework
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
FI	Frontier Issues
FPI	Flagship Programme Initiative
FTA	Fixed-Term Appointment
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HDI	Human Development Index
IAES	UN Women Independent Evaluation and Audit Services
IES	UN Women Independent Evaluation Service
ICF	Internal Control Framework
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IT	information technology
LGBTQI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or those questioning their gender identity or sexual orientation), and intersex
LOA	Local Organization Agreement
LUKMEF	Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Foundation
LPP	Leadership and Political Participation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OEEF	Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness Framework
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PDCVA	Agricultural Value Chains Development Project
PSHA	Peace, Security and Humanitarian Actions
RMS	Results Management System
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSA	Special Service Agreement
SWAP	System-Wide Action Plan
TOC	Theory of Change
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNSDCF	United Nations System Development Cooperation Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WLPP	Women's Leadership and Political Participation

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1. DESCRIPTION OF THIS EVALUATION

1.1. Purpose, objectives and use of the Country Portfolio Evaluation

This Country Portfolio Evaluation takes place within a context where the current strategy for UN Women Cameroon will be replaced by a new Strategic Note (2022–2024). The latter was to be prepared in the last quarter of 2020 and include the year 2021. However, following the decision of the team of UN Heads of Agency to align the new United Nations System Development Cooperation Framework with the new Cameroon Development Plan, the validity of the 2018–2020 Strategic Note was extended to December 2021. Therefore, this is the right time to inform the strategy of UN Women Cameroon with lessons learned from the Country Programme Evaluation.

The evaluation seeks to:

Identify lessons drawn from the previous strategic period to inform decision-making, especially with regard to drafting of the new Strategic Note (2022–2024) by UN Women Cameroon;

1. Strengthen the accountability of UN Women regarding its work towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment;
2. Analyse how human rights principles and approach are integrated in the design and implementation of the Strategic Note.

In addition, the evaluation enquired about adaptations made by the Country Office in its support to national efforts against COVID-19. This helped to understand UN Women Cameroon's contribution to the country's effort, in coordination with the United Nations system, and determine how results planned in the Strategic Note were affected by the pandemic.

Primary users targeted by this evaluation are (i) the UN Women Cameroon Country Office, (ii) UN Women Evaluation and Audit Services, (iii) key national stakeholders in Cameroon, (iv) the United Nations system in Cameroon and (v) the UN Women Regional Office for West and Central Africa.

1.2. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation focuses on Country Office interventions in the five thematic areas of the Strategic Note 2018–2020 in its operational, normative and coordination work in support of gender equality. Considering recent activities¹ of the Country Office in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation notes the Country Office's capacity to redeploy its human and financial resources to serve in a changing context.

The evaluation examines the five impact areas² of the Strategic Note according to five criteria³, notably (i) relevance, (ii) efficiency, (iii) effectiveness, (iv) sustainability and (v) gender balance and human rights. These evaluation criteria were developed into the 20 questions listed in Annex V.

The analysis of gender coordination focused on the Country Office's efforts to mainstream gender in the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2018–2020, the 2018 and 2019 Humanitarian Response Plans, the Gender Scorecard Action Plan and the coordination of two Gender Theme Groups (the United Nations Gender Thematic Group and the Civil Society Organization Task Force on Gender and Public Policies).

¹ [Cameroon: Distribution of COVID-19 prevention kits to women voters](#)

² Impact areas include Women's Leadership and Political Participation (WLPP); Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE); Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW); Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action (PSHA); and Frontier Issues (FI).

³ The coherence criterion, both internal and external, is handled by questions asked under the relevance and efficiency criteria, respectively

1.3. Data collection and analysis

In line with the general concept of Country Portfolio Evaluations, this evaluation was carried out in four stages:

1. A kick-off workshop aimed at confirming the specifications of the evaluation through consultation with the Reference Group and UN Women Cameroon personnel;
2. Semi-structured interviews and discussion groups with all major stakeholder groups;
3. A preliminary findings workshop after data collection;
4. Drafting of the report after triangulation and independent analysis of evidence.

1.3.1. Semi-structured interviews

At the inaugural meeting with the Reference Group and UN Women Cameroon personnel, the evaluation questions were prioritized in a participatory manner. Some of the questions were reworded for better understanding and relevance to the context. Meeting participants also agreed on the timetable for the evaluation and identified the documentation required for the evaluation as well as a list of contacts from different associations and institutions. This initial participation aimed to improve ownership of the evaluation in its conceptual phase and ensure critical adoption of its findings and recommendations⁴.

To guide data collection and analysis, an evaluation matrix was developed (Annex XI). It presents key evaluation questions, judgment criteria, sources of information and methods of data collection for each of the main evaluation criteria. For interviews and semi-structured discussion sessions, data collection tools were adapted to different categories of participants (see Annex III).

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon, the evaluation was conducted virtually, during both the desk review and data collection phases. The Zoom application was used primarily for group and individual interviews. Alternatively, mobile phones were used to reach stakeholders who did not have access to the Internet.

1.3.2. Representative selection of respondents

Information gathering began with personnel of the UN Women Country Office to identify country portfolio interventions. This was followed by interviews with implementing partners, beneficiaries of interventions, donors and United Nations colleagues. Interviews were not limited to residents of Yaoundé, as respondents were selected after a stakeholder mapping exercise (see Annex VIII). Portfolio coverage, stakeholder diversity, perceived expertise and the nature of involvement with UN Women interventions were some of the criteria used for selecting respondents within the limits imposed by their availability.

The diversity of the types of participation allowed for a purposive selection of interviewees, with special attention to gender balance. Participants in focus group discussions were previously involved in a variety of Country Office interventions, including capacity-building, gender mainstreaming in humanitarian interventions, political advocacy for peace and security, women's political participation, women's economic empowerment and prevention of violence against women.

⁴ A debriefing on the preliminary results was held at the end of the data collection to obtain feedback from the Reference Group and the Country Office.

The interviews took place over a 25 day period and involved 53 persons (including 31 women) from 34 organizations in the following categories: ministries and parastatals,⁵ United Nations agencies,⁶ donors,⁷ the media⁸ and civil society organizations.⁹

The sample of respondents included a good majority of women, but people living with a disability objective, depending on availability. In the end, a good number of participants in professional or leadership positions in ministries and parastatals, non-governmental organizations, embassies and the media were interviewed.

To the extent possible, efforts were made to minimize the use of jargon and to encourage speakers to use the language they are comfortable with. Some spoke in English, others in French. Data collection instruments were revised and tested for different categories of respondents. Group discussions were conducted in a way that limited the possibility of unequal power interaction. At the start of each interview, participants were informed of their rights (including the right to refrain from responding), the purpose of the evaluation and the use of the information entrusted to evaluators.

1.3.3. Perception survey¹⁰

An online stakeholder perception survey was also undertaken to collect quantitative data on the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Cameroon Country Office Strategic Note 2018–2020. The survey questionnaire targeted 15 UN Women personnel and 6 United Nations personnel. A second survey focused on all non-United Nations stakeholders, comprising 69 people, all grouped under the term “UN Women partners”.

Unfortunately, the response rate from non-United Nations respondents was estimated to be too low (4 per cent) for consolidated results to be representative. Forty-four per cent of those contacted did not even open the announcement email, and only 17 per cent opened the questionnaire. It is assumed that this is owing to a lack of Internet access. The rate of 4 complete responses out of the 49 people¹¹ informed remains very low in all cases.

Figure 1.3.3a. Survey participation rate (not inclusive of UN Women personnel)

⁵ The Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family, the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Employment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the National Institute of Statistics, the Central Bureau of Census and Population Studies, the Sub-Regional Institute for Statistics and Applied Economics and the General Delegation of National Security.

⁶ The UN Resident Coordinator, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), UN Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

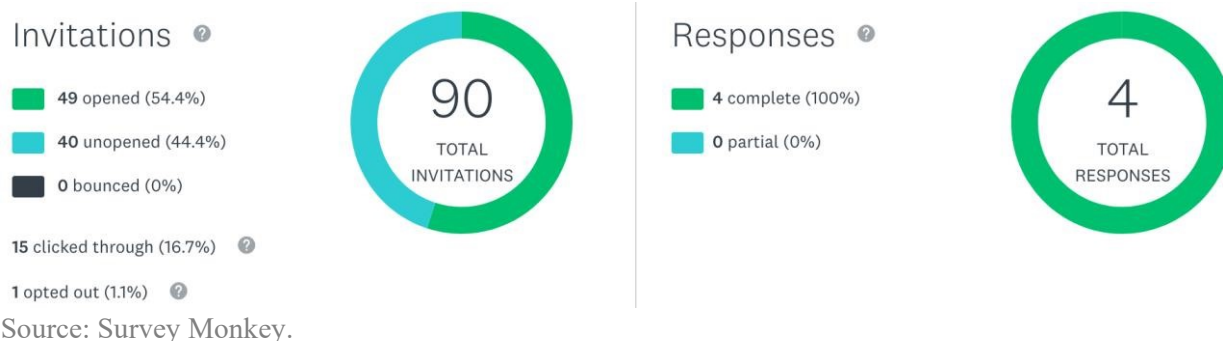
⁷ the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Canadian High Commission, the European External Action Service.

⁸ Cameroon Tribune, CRTV, Le Messenger.

⁹ APELF, ALVF, CHRAPA, RAEDO, REO, Light Works, amongst others.

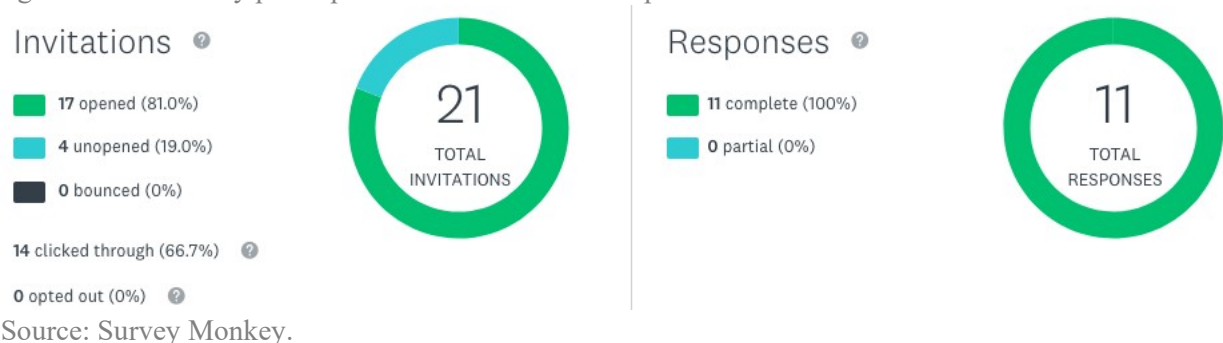
¹⁰ An online survey conducted via the SurveyMonkey application. In light of its regular use since 2016, it is reasonable to assume that the responses shared online on Survey Monkey are secure. For more information, including end-to-end encryption, visit: <https://privacy.commonssense.org/evaluation/survey-monkey>. After data analysis, the survey was exported. It will be permanently deleted from the online platform after six months.

¹¹ Only 49 people were able (or willing) to read the online survey announcement sent via email.



Of the 17 UN Women personnel who responded to the survey, only 11 completed it. It is assumed that drivers make up the majority of those (4) who did not even open the questionnaire.

Figure 1.3.3b. Survey participation rate of UN Women personnel



The difference in response rates between the two audiences can be attributed to the geographic and socioeconomic coverage of communication technologies. Stable connectivity is required to navigate from one online survey question to another. UN Women personnel are better placed in this regard than the UN Women stakeholder group. This indicates that online surveys are not suitable for collecting data in countries where the level of communication technology penetration is very low.

1.3.4. Ethics and gender responsiveness

This evaluation is characterized by a gender-responsive approach to assessing UN Women's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment. To this end, the evaluation collected testimonies of intended and unintended changes from target groups. It attempted to trace the mechanisms of change and the likely contributions of UN Women.

The evaluation focused on gender and human rights dimensions by adopting:

- Qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis that allow the evaluation to take into account the nuances of multiple opinions and the diversity of participants.
- Sensitivity, during the data collection phase, to the multiple tasks that respondents must perform on a daily basis. For example, for those who work from home, sufficient time between interviews was allowed. This helped to compensate for occasional interruptions by children or other family members.
- Overall, an approach informed by an acute awareness of the structures that contribute to inequalities experienced by women, men, girls and boys, especially those who experience intersectional forms of social exclusion as a result of language and ethnicity, class, disability, etc.

The evaluation complied with standards that ensure respect for participants' dignity. Sensitive data obtained during the data collection phase was managed in a confidential manner. For example, the information collected online is completely anonymous and will be destroyed six months after the publication of this report. At the outset of the interview sessions, the independence of the evaluators was clearly explained, and participants were given assurances on confidentiality.

1.3.5. Data analysis

The data collected in notebooks were transcribed into summary tables that were structured in the same way as the data collection tools. As shown in the table from the content analysis file (Figure 1.3.5), data collected from various individual and group interviews were transcribed, and then the most salient statements were classified in an Excel file whose powerful filtering and sorting features were used to identify regularities or themes.

A comparative analysis of various statements sought to point out similarities whose frequency may clearly suggest consistent programme facts. During this phase, the views expressed were retained for later confirmation whenever the frequency of occurrence was considered to be significant. During the data analysis phase, the evaluation team used its familiarity with the work of UN Women to assess the plausibility of interpretations put forward.

Figure 1.3.5. Example of transcripts for content analysis in Excel

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	Nom	Org	Role	Question	Donnée									
2	Personne 50	35	Consultant	E22	"Le soutien en									
3	Personne 8	1	Staff	E3	"Formation en									
4	Personne 44	1	Staff	E3	"Renforcement									
5	Personne 1	1	Staff	E3	"Appui à l'aut									
6	Personne 37	25	partenaire	E3	"la quasi-inexis									
7	Personne 50	35	Consultant	E4	"La faible repr									
8	Personne 39	27	partenaire	E4	"Les retards da									
9	Personne 2	1	Staff	E1	"Il est difficile									
10	Personne 30	5	partenaire	E1	"Adoption de									
11	Personne 44	16	partenaire	E1	"Contribution									
12	Personne 6	16	partenaire	E1	"Nos réalisati									
13	Personne 2	25	partenaire	E21	"L'utilité et la									
14	Personne 4	1	Staff	E22	"les activités a									
15	Personne 6	35	Consultant	E22	"Le positionne									
16	Personne 44	1	Staff	E3	"L'initiative su									
17	Personne 39	27	partenaire	E3	"Facilitation de									

Source: Evaluation Team transcripts

Findings were articulated based on corroborating facts from the most recent oral information, written documentation and the online survey. This confirmation process, otherwise known as “triangulation”, consisted of a cross-comparison of the content obtained from one or another of the methods described above and by cross-checking the information obtained from various sources.

1.3.6. Challenges and limitations of the evaluation

A two-week preparatory mission took place five months prior to the actual evaluation. It allowed the evaluation team to take note of the Country Office and Reference Group expectations (see Annex IV) regarding the scope and conduct of the Country Portfolio Evaluation. However, the five months were not sufficiently used by the Country Office to scan and share requested documentation with the evaluation team.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated technical adjustments during the data collection phase. Desk review and interviews were conducted online. As a result, non-digitized documents and people without access to telecommunications remained out of reach.

An inventory of Country Office documents made available online to the evaluation team revealed some information gaps on existing projects. For some projects, documents such as Cooperation Agreements, known as Project Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) and Local Organization Agreements (LOAs), were missing. Before starting the interviews, the evaluation team devoted three weeks of its time to retrieving them. As a result, the document review phase took much longer than expected.

An important limitation to this evaluation was posed by the insecurity in some regions as well as COVID-19. When consulted about which programme implementation sites were worth visiting during the evaluation and outside of the capital, Reference Group members and UN Women personnel recommended that the evaluation team visit Maroua,

Ntui-Batchenga-Yoko, Bamenda and Buea. In the end, however, it was only possible to visit one of the implementation sites located in Bertoua.¹²

Desk review and interviews were conducted remotely. This considerably limited the contribution of observation methods to the body of evidence that underlies evaluation findings. The evaluation team attempted to partially alleviate this problem by requesting that the National Consultant and Assistant be given office space. Workspace was made available to them, along with the necessary work equipment. This allowed them to physically consult several documents and to interact regularly with personnel.

Still, online interviews are a poor substitute for the richness of face-to-face discussions that are characteristic of traditional interview sessions. Poor connectivity precluded the possibility of video conferencing. This deprived the evaluation team of any opportunity to pick up and record non-verbal clues that could have been very useful for interpreting what was said in the interviews.

Even without the pandemic, parts of the anglophone regions would have been inaccessible because some of the territories where UN Women interventions are implemented became highly volatile in terms of security during this evaluation. Overall, these limitations prevented the evaluation from directly observing UN Women's humanitarian work.

The evaluation team lacked the time to consolidate the various theories of change reconstructed by impact area into a coherent whole. There was no opportunity for a second participatory consultation with UN Women Cameroon personnel and stakeholders to discuss assumptions and anticipated constraints.

The other important limitation is particularly noticeable in the "effectiveness" section, where some of the data were drawn from the Results Management System (RMS). Result indicator values were not independently reported. Figures (and progress report narratives published in the narrative section of the RMS) were provided by the very personnel involved in programme implementation. This of course does not go without bias on the overall look of performance graphs. Primary sources cited by staff to substantiate reporting can be selected with the same bias and help produce advantageous reports in the RMS. This implies the possibility that the resulting representations are always open to scepticism and questioning.

The evaluation team tried to limit these shortcomings through stakeholder consultation and would have liked to conduct more than the lone field visit to Bertoua. However, COVID-19 posed a significant challenge to the conduct of the evaluation.

Lastly, regarding the calculation of budget allocations, the evaluation team is aware of the possibility of double counting for funds with allocations that span multiple budget cycles. This creates uncertainty in the financial estimates. For example, a project with a budget of US\$1 million may have spent US\$200,000 in 2018 and carried over US\$800,000 for 2019. Simply applying summation means counting an allocation of US\$ 1,800,000 in the financial year 2018–2019. Owing to time constraints, it has not been possible to control this risk by identifying budget carry-overs.

2. BACKGROUND OF UN WOMEN'S WORK IN CAMEROON

Cameroon had an estimated population of 25.9 million in 2019¹³ and a gender ratio of 98 men to 100 women. Its human development indices show challenges in achieving sustainable development by 2030. The analysis¹⁴ of development inequality indices, the Gender Development Index (GDI), and the Gender Inequality Index (GII) reveal huge disparities within Cameroonian society and specific gender equality gaps. In 2018, the country's Human

¹² Following the possibility of carrying out field missions while respecting barrier measures, a field visit was carried out and limited only to Second Chance Education interventions implemented in Bertoua.

¹³ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/cameroon>.

¹⁴ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/fr/CMR.pdf.

Development Index (HDI) was 0.563 and ranked 150 out of a total of 189 countries. In the same year, the GDI was 0.869 and ranked 151 out of 166 countries. Its GII at the time was 0.566 and ranked 140 out of 162 countries.

According to the Fourth Cameroon Household Survey the population living below the poverty line was 37.5 per cent nationally, with 90.4 per cent living in rural areas (37.2 per cent men and 37.7 per cent women). In the Northern Regions, poverty affects 63 per cent of women in the Far North, 50 per cent in Adamawa and 53 per cent in the North.

Social disparities persist and are particularly detrimental to poor households, rural areas and women. The region of the Far North has been hit by cross-border incursions by the Boko Haram sect from Borno, Nigeria. Populations from the Central African Republic arrive massively in the Adamawa and Eastern regions as they flee from the same sects. Lastly, the English-speaking regions of Cameroon (North-West and South-West) are going through a sociopolitical crisis. Other forms of marginalization within the Cameroonian population are disability and homosexuality.

The Third General¹⁵ Population and Housing Census of 2005¹⁶ documented 262,119 people living with at least one disability,¹⁶ including 127,381 women and 134,738 men, representing an overall 1.5 per cent disability prevalence rate¹⁷ (1.5 per cent for women and 1.6 per cent for men) in the resident population.

In Cameroon, homosexual acts¹⁸ have been punishable under the law since 1972. The National Observatory¹⁹ of the Rights of LGBTQI Persons decries increased violations of the rights of defenders of LGBTQI persons²⁰ in the face of the indifference and occasionally, support of the administrative, police and judicial authorities.

3. ANALYSIS OF UN WOMEN CAMEROON'S COUNTRY PORTFOLIO

This section of the report presents data on UN Women Cameroon's programme, expenditures, activities, stakeholders and theories of change, based on literature review.

3.1. Overview of the 2018–2020 Strategic Note

UN Women Cameroon's 2018–2020 Strategic Note has eight outcomes divided into five impact areas: Women's Leadership and Political Participation; Women's Economic Empowerment; Ending Violence against Women; Humanitarian Action, Peace and Security; and Frontier Issues (Annex VII). It is part of the implementation process of UNDAF 2018–2020. The Strategic Note is aligned with the national gender priorities outlined in the National Growth and Employment Document (2010–2020), the national gender policy, national sectoral plans and Cameroon's international commitments.

¹⁵ It took 9 years to produce the Third General Population Census. If this interval is maintained, we will not have any update before 2023.

¹⁶ For example, hearing, speech, mental or physical impairment, leprosy, albinism.

¹⁷ Rural areas have a higher rate of people living with a disability (1.7%) than urban areas (1.3%). By region, Adamawa has the lowest prevalence rate (0.9%) while the South region has the highest (2.6%). The disability prevalence in Cameroon's population increases with age, probably as a result of disabling diseases that also increase with age. The population under age 15 has a prevalence rate of 1.0%, while the rate for those over 60 is 5.7%.

¹⁸ Article 347-1 of Cameroon's new Penal Code, adopted in July 2016, punishes "sexual relations with a person of the same sex" with a prison term of six months to five years and a fine of 20,000 to 200,000 CFA francs (about US\$40 to US\$400). Likewise, Article 347-bis of the same Penal Code provides for a jail term of six months to five years for anyone convicted of "same-sex sexual relations".

¹⁹ The observatory was set up in 2016 at the behest of 20 identity-based associations in Cameroon, including the Cameroon AIDS Foundation (CAMFAIDS).

²⁰ <https://www.fidh.org/fr/regions/afrique/cameroun/17065-cameroun-les-defenseurs-des-droits-des-personnes-lgbti>
<https://www.fidh.org/fr/regions/afrique/cameroun/17065-cameroun-les-defenseurs-des-droits-des-personnes-lgbti-confrontes-a-l-confrontes-a-l>

3.2. Review of Strategic Note indicators²¹

A total of 45 outputs and 59 indicators provide insight on the eight outcomes of the five impact areas of the Strategic Note.²² There are also nine outputs from the Strategic Note's Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness Framework (OEEF) that are monitored through 19 indicators.

The evaluation team analysed the quality of the 59 results framework indicators, with particular emphasis on their specificity and measurability, taking into account the national context or office constraints. The analysis²³ reveals that at least 13 indicators need to be reformulated, including 3 indicators in the area of Women's Leadership and Political Participation, 5 indicators in the area of Women's Economic Empowerment, 2 indicators in the area of Ending Violence Against Women, 1 indicator in the area of Humanitarian Action, Peace and Security, and 2 indicators in the area of Frontier Issues.

In the OEEF, Indicator 3.3B "*Status of evaluation management response implementation*" should be reformulated as "*Percentage of key actions from management response implemented*". Similarly, it should be noted that the target for Indicator 3.3A "*Number of monitoring reports produced (quarterly reports, donor reports, weekly office meetings)*" set at 400 should be reduced to a more achievable number.

3.3. Strategic Note theories of change

The evaluation team reviewed the theory of change designed by the Country Office during its 2017 planning (see Annex VIII). The team considered it important to first formulate the theories of change per thematic area before formulating a theory of change for the entire strategy. It is noted that in the Strategic Note results, both Gender Statistics and Women's Political Participation are placed under Governance and Participation. The heterogeneity of this last thematic area is confirmed with the presence of an output on HIV-sensitive response. It poses a challenge, as no causal succession of results can be explored.

The cross-cutting nature of gender statistics was discussed with personnel during the inaugural workshop. The evaluation team proposed that its outputs be distributed across all impact areas, as it could not be made a thematic area in its own right.

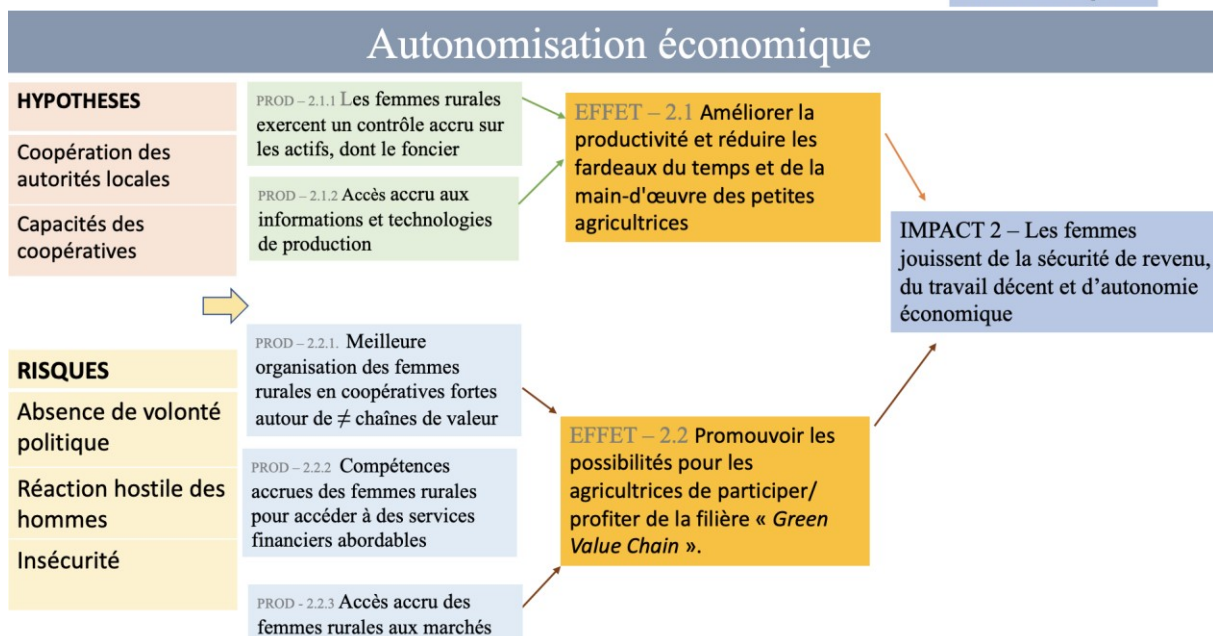
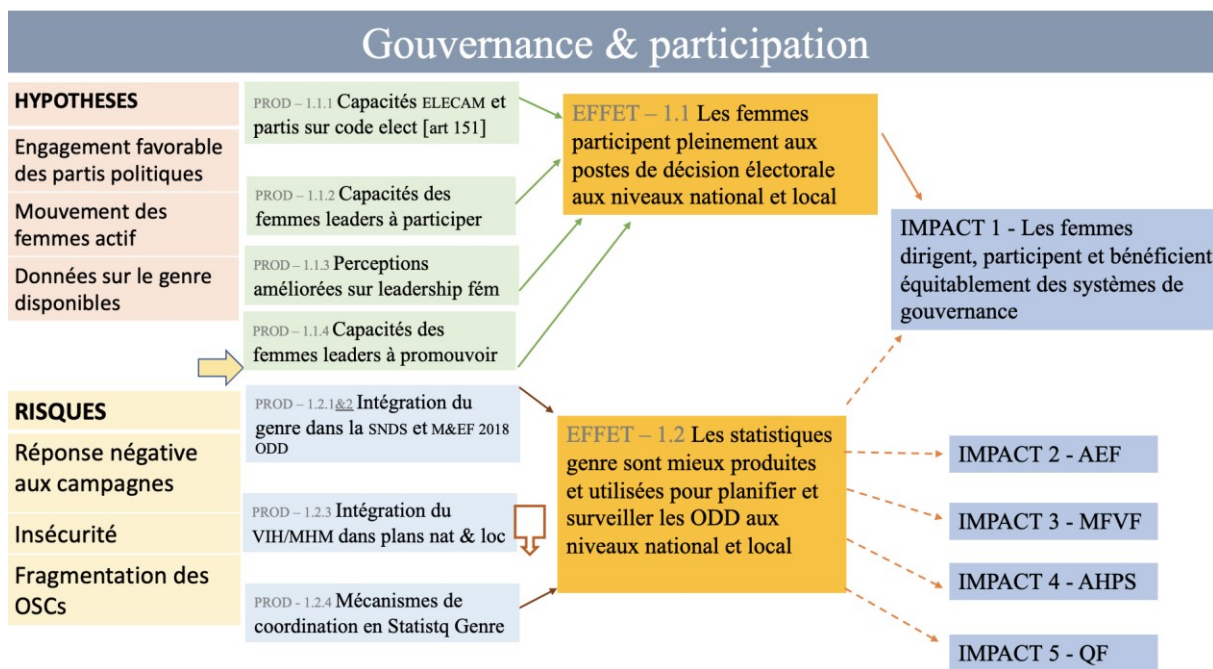
It was also suggested that the Frontier Issues impact area, created to accommodate the Second Chance Education programme, be merged with the Women's Economic Empowerment impact area.

Figure 3.3. - Theories of change by impact area.

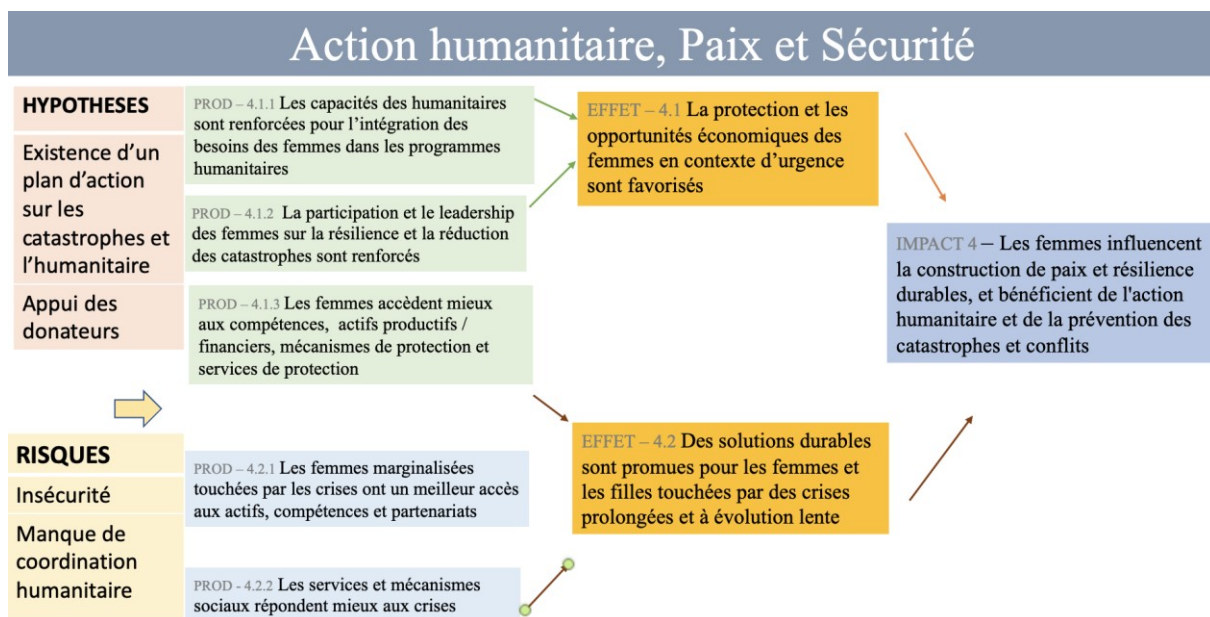
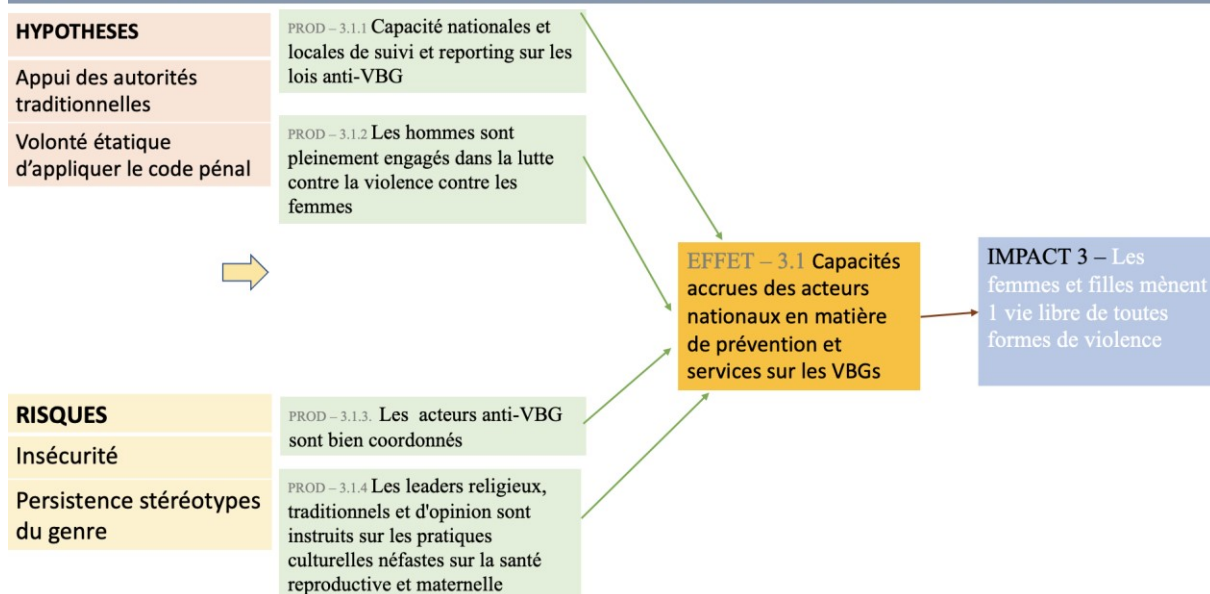
²¹ UN Women personnel devoted two working days, from 31 October to 1 November 2019, to an internal midterm review to thoroughly examine results achieved by reviewing the indicators of the results framework of the Strategic Note. The review is considered internal because it did not involve any external partners. It nevertheless updated the indicators in light of the new context and addressed certain inconsistencies and weaknesses in their formulation.

²² Summary table of the results framework.

²³ See sub Appendix 3 the results framework summary table, entitled "Indicators by impact area").



Élimination de toutes les formes de violence à l'endroit des femmes

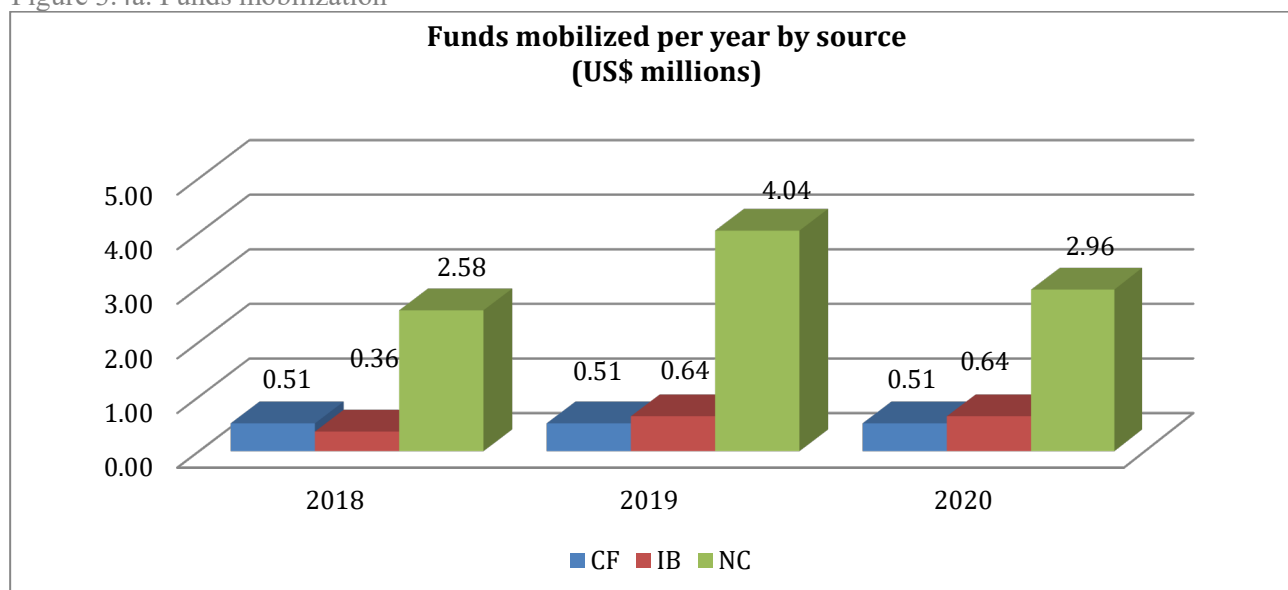


Source: Evaluation Team TOC reconstruction

3.4. Financial aspects of the Strategic Note 2018–2020

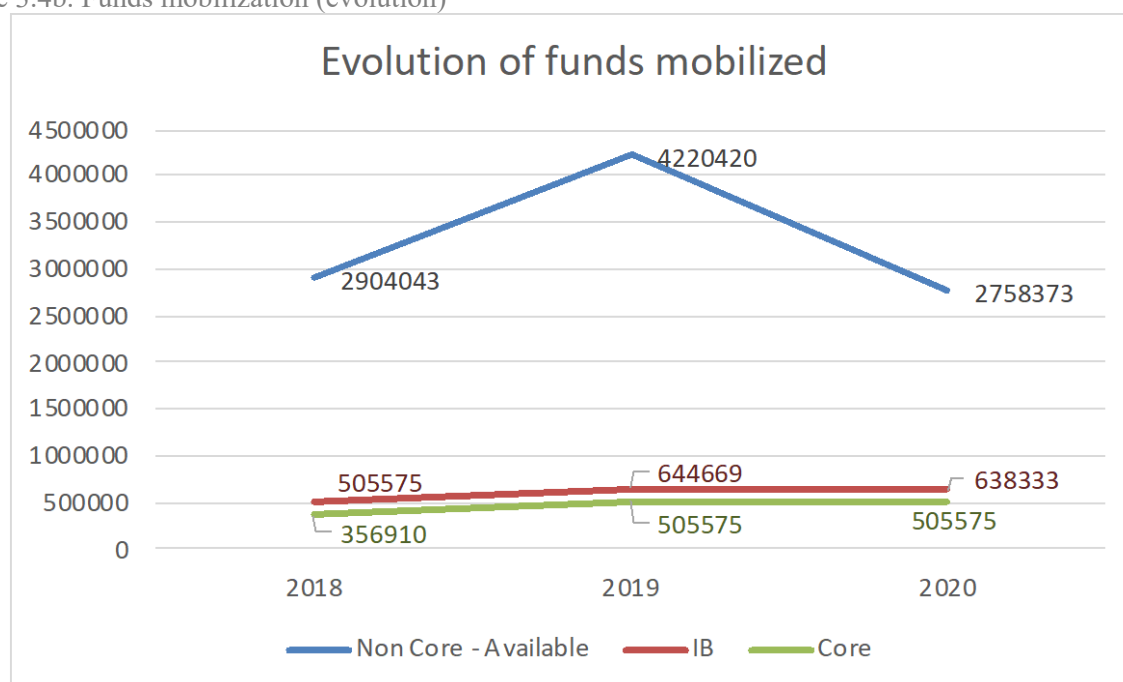
The year 2019 stands out from other years in that the amount of funds mobilized was significantly higher than in previous years, amounting to US\$5,385,664 compared with US\$3,461,508 in 2018 and US\$4,127,281 in 2020. Core funding stagnated at US\$505,575 regardless of the year considered, while extrabudgetary funds have significantly increased year after year.

Figure 3.4a. Funds mobilization



Source : RMS (2018-2020) on 10/08/2020

Figure 3.4b. Funds mobilization (evolution)



Source: Data from the RMS (2018–2020) as of 10 August 2020.

3.4.1. Financial mobilization by impact area

The impact area Women’s Leadership and Political Participation should have been titled “Governance” to avoid it being confused with one of its sub-thematic areas bearing the same name. Result areas related to Women’s Political Participation, the fight against HIV/AIDS and Gender Statistics are found under this area. As this term is used by the RMS, it has been maintained in the presentation of allocations by result area. For implementation of the five impact areas related to the Development Result Framework (DRF), the Country Office managed to mobilize US\$9,563,116 (non-core funds), i.e. nearly 64 per cent for the five impact areas of the Strategic Note. This mobilization represented, in decreasing order: US\$3,070,660 (32.1 per cent) for Women’s Leadership and Political Participation; US\$3,049,501 (31.9 per cent) for Women’s Economic Empowerment; US\$2,135,472 (22.3 per cent) for Humanitarian Action, Peace

and Security; US\$1,255,483 (13.1 per cent) for Frontier Issues; and US\$52,000 (0.5 per cent) for Ending Violence Against Women.

Based on the initial budget of the Strategic Note, the Country Office managed to mobilize 90.4 per cent for the Women's Economic Empowerment impact area, 74.4 per cent for Women's Leadership and Political Participation; 43 per cent for Humanitarian Action, Peace and Security and 5.8 per cent for Ending Violence Against Women. This last percentage reflects clear underfunding of activities related to this impact area (see Appendix-4: financial mobilization table by impact area).

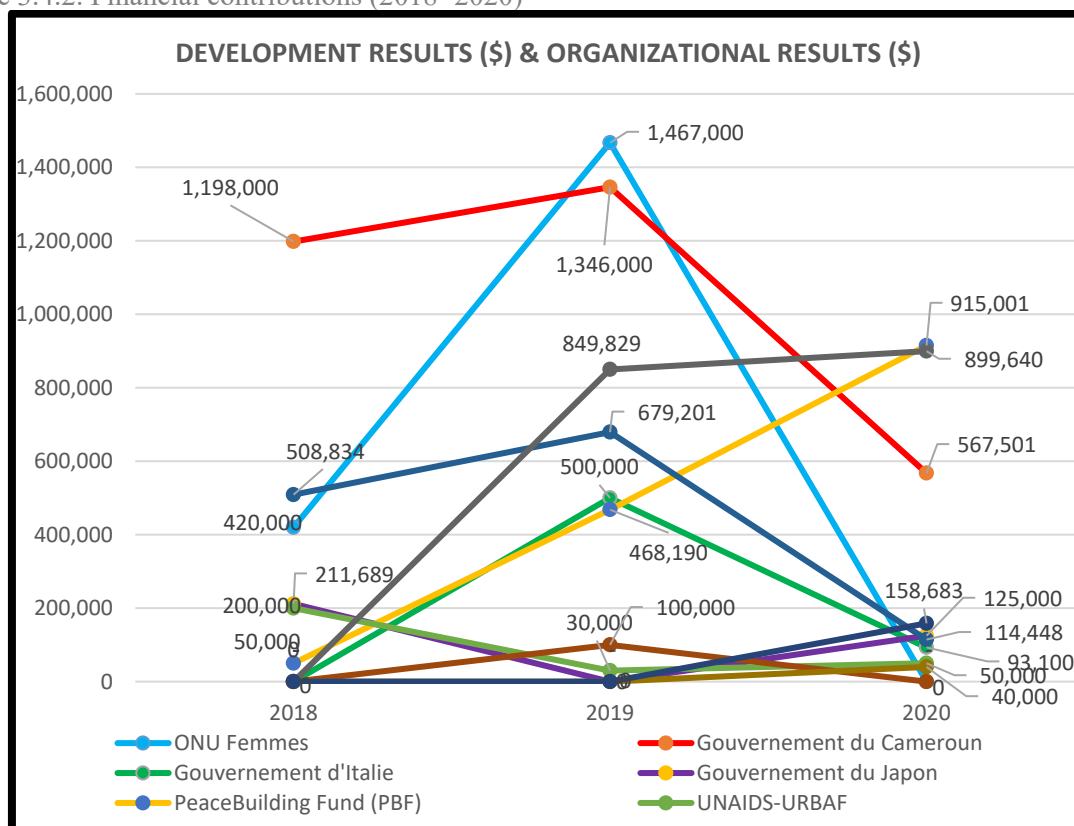
3.4.2. Financial contribution by donor

A total of US\$9,772,116 was made available to the Country Office by all donors over the period of 2018–2020. The main donor was the Government of Cameroon, with US\$3,111,501 (31.8 per cent), followed by UN Women's core, Institutional Budget and Extra Budgetary (US\$1,887,000, accounting for 19.3 per cent), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) Swedish Cooperation (US\$1,749,469, accounting for 17.9 per cent), the Peace Building Fund (US\$1,433,191, accounting for 14.7 per cent) and the BHP Billiton Foundation (US\$1,302,483, accounting for 13.3 per cent). It is important to note that the Government of Cameroon was the main donor because it contracts loans from financial institutions such as the African Development Bank (ADB) or the Development Bank of Central African States (BDEAC) to support its interventions.

Nearly 15.4 per cent of funds for the implementation of interventions was provided by a group of six donors: the Government of Italy (6.1 per cent), the Government of Japan (3.4 per cent), UNAIDS-URBAF (2.9 per cent), the Generalitat of Catalonia (1.6 per cent), the Coca-Cola Company (1 per cent) and UNAIDS (0.4 per cent).

An analysis per fund type (DRF or OEEF) highlights that the Government of Cameroon had a higher contribution to OEEF funds (57.9 per cent compared with 32.5 per cent for DRF). It also shows a sudden decrease of funding from different sources since 2019.

Figure 3.4.2. Financial contributions (2018–2020)

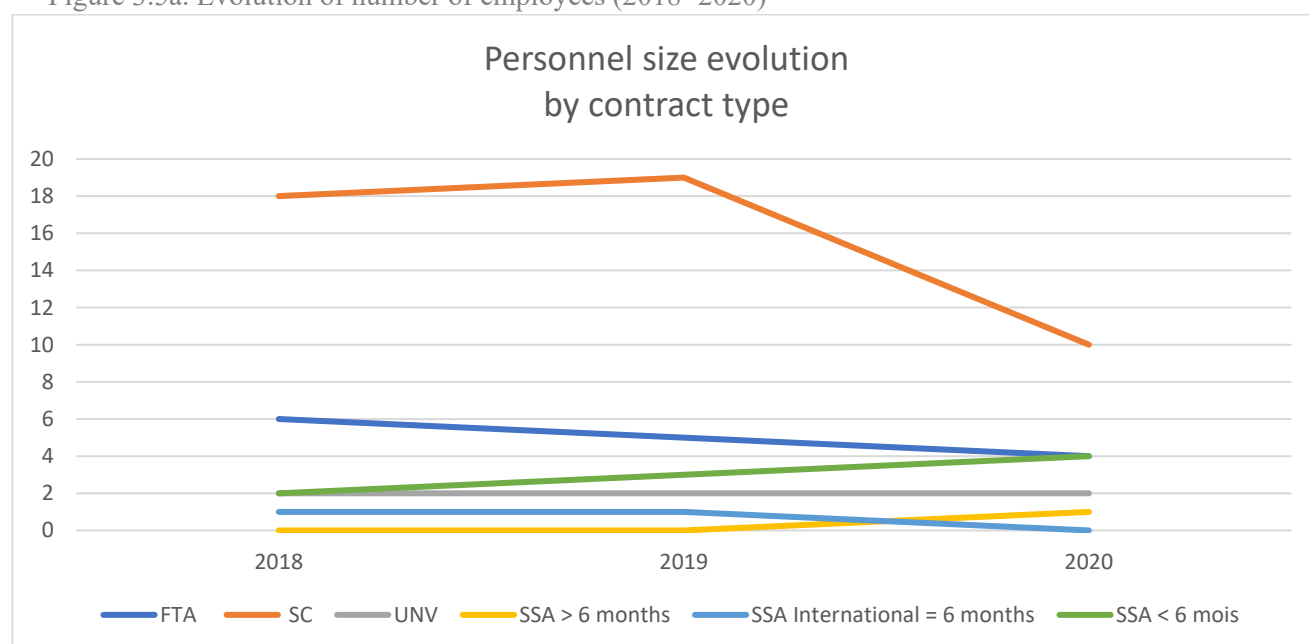


Source : RMS as of 10/08/2020

3.5. Human resources

The description of UN Women Cameroon personnel does not only serve to outline the profile of the office. Human resource composition, capacities and evolution also allows understanding of the extent to which the Country Office has given itself the means to achieve its ambitions. This evaluation will explore whether the Country Office has access to the skills and capacities needed to deliver portfolio results and achieve optimal positioning in the gender arena, both among United Nations entities and national partners.

Figure 3.5a. Evolution of number of employees (2018–2020)



Source: UN Women Cameroon, Operations Unit.

Towards the end of 2019, UN Women personnel numbers dropped by 15 per cent from the first quarter, from 30 to 21 employees. This instability is attributed primarily to financial challenges faced by the Country Office in 2019, as suggested by the graph on financial contributions (see Figure 3.4.2). The reduced size of the workforce is echoed by the large number of precarious contracts signed by employees with UN Women. In 2018, the Country Office had 29 employees, with the following contract types: 18 Service Contracts, 6 Fixed-Term Appointments (FTAs), 2 United Nations Volunteers, 2 Special Service Agreements (SSAs) for less than 6 months, and 1 SSA for more than 6 months. In 2019, there were 30 employees, with the following contract types: 19 Service Contracts, 5 FTAs, 3 SSAs for less than 6 months, 2 United Nations Volunteers and 1 SSA of more than 6 months. For 2020, there were 21 employees with the following contract types: 10 Service Contracts, 4 FTAs, 4 SSAs of less than 6 months, 2 United Nations Volunteers and 1 SSA of more than 6 months.

Table 3.5b. - Human resources per year (2018–2020)

UN Women Country Office Cameroon human resources per year			
	2018	2019	2020
Fixed-term appointment staff	6	5	4
Service contract personnel	18	19	10
United Nations Volunteer	2	2	2
Special Service Agreement personnel (duration greater than 6 months)	-	-	1
International Special Service Agreement (duration of 6 months)	1	1	-
Special Service Agreement (duration less than 6 months)	2	3	4
Total	29	30	21

Source: UN Women Cameroon, Operations Unit.

Most of the SSA contracts are precarious. Employees with SSAs are the only personnel with less than six months of service (two SSAs in 2018, three SSAs in 2019 and four SSAs in 2020). The evaluation was unable to ascertain whether these SSAs were recruited for core functions or for support services. Regardless of the year considered, the highest proportion of personnel are those with Service Contracts, which deprive them of benefits (pension, annual

leave, health insurance, etc.) that are characteristic of those with stable²⁴ or FTA contracts. The evaluation team observed that the proportion of SSA contracts has changed from year to year (60 per cent in 2017, 59 per cent in 2018 and 47 per cent in 2019). In light of the absolute numbers, this relative drop seems to be a result of the decrease in the total number of personnel rather than a decrease in the number of SSAs or an increase in the number of FTAs.

Furthermore, two recently filled positions (Information Technology Assistant and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer) are of the Service Contract category.

The withdrawal of the Country Office to Yaoundé by closing its premises in Ntui, Maroua and the Far North is not the only factor accounting for the decrease in human resources. The sub-offices ceased to exist since 2019, and the workforce size was 21 in December 2019. Twelve months later, the office was down to 16 personnel, representing a 50 per cent drop from the staffing level in the second quarter of 2019.

It is therefore understandable that only some of the positions in the Country Office's organigram (Annex X) are filled. Others are vacant, either because recruitments have not yet been made or because of recent departures of personnel. For example, the Humanitarian Action, Peace and Security impact area was the hardest hit in terms of personnel losses, including the Far North Region's Head of Office. Four other UN Women humanitarian personnel left, apart from the Gender-Based Violence Programme Officer, who is now responsible for the thematic area bearing the same name. The position of Programme Manager Leadership and Political Participation was reformulated in 2020 to Programme Manager Governance, Women, Peace and Security. This change combines the responsibilities for two major thematic areas of the Strategic Note in the duties of one personnel in addition to the portfolio related to the coordination of the Gender Thematic Group. Accumulation of functions is also found within the top-level management of the Country Office; with the Representative of UN Women Cameroon dispatched to Niger, his Deputy has been acting as interim Representative since August 2018.

4. FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

At the end of the data collection phase, the evaluation team presented preliminary findings to Country Office personnel and the Reference Group. The primary findings have been nuanced and refined to take the form presented below.

4.1. RELEVANCE

4.1.1. Alignment

Finding 1.

The Strategic Note (2018–2020) covers very strategic policy areas in gender and human rights. Its relevance would be stronger if its implementation better reflected some of the concerns previously raised by the international treaty review committees²⁵, including the Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The vast majority of interview participants, with the exception of a few United Nations system respondents, agreed that UN Women interventions cover the most important areas of gender and human rights. This almost unanimous view was corroborated by the online survey.

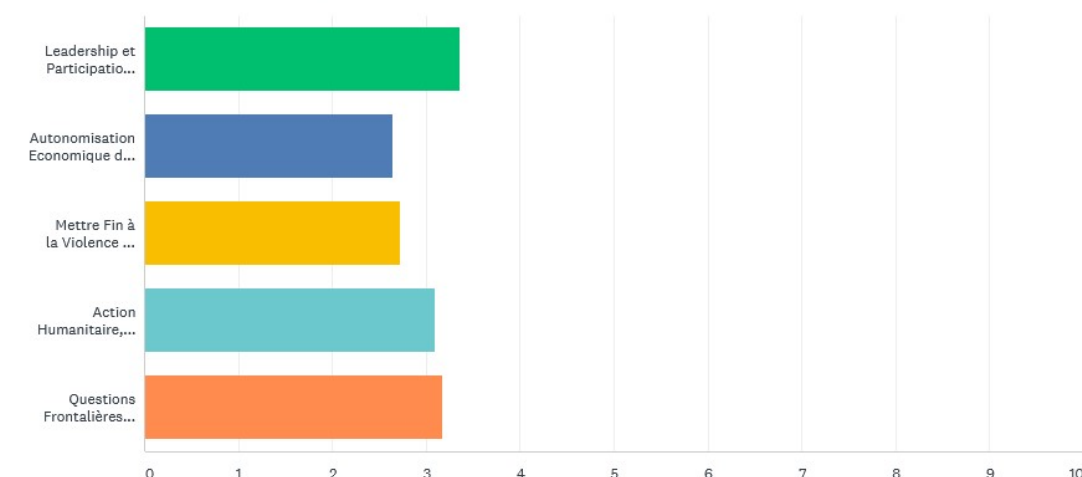
Figure 4.1.1. Importance of UN Women Cameroon intervention areas

²⁴ Or "actual staff".

²⁵ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2014) and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2019).

Quels sont, d'après vous, les types d'interventions qui font la fierté d'ONU Femmes Cameroun? Ve...

Réponse(s) obtenue(s) : 11 Question(s) ignorée(s) : 0



ENQUÊTE SUR LA NOTE STRATÉGIQUE ONU FEMMES Cameroun 2018-2020

🔍 (0)

Nonetheless, reading the Strategic Note with the final conclusions of the 2014 *Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* in mind, it is clear that the Strategic Note has not addressed some of the priorities identified in the periodic review of the implementation of international treaties signed by Cameroon.

For example, regarding the integration of provisions on gender-based violence into the Cameroonian Penal Code,²⁶ the 2019 final conclusions of the *Committee on Economic and Social Rights* urged the Government of Cameroon to demonstrate, with supporting evidence, the extent to which the inclusion of gender-based violence under the penal code allows for the prosecution and conviction of perpetrators of violence against women:

While noting the information provided by the State party on the application of provisions of the Penal Code to acts of violence against women, the Committee regrets the lack of statistics on the number of cases where these provisions have been applied, and on the perpetrators prosecuted and convicted.²⁷

The Strategic Note provides for supporting the country in the production and use of gender statistics. Through the Women Count programme and collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics, figures on the prevalence of gender-based violence in Cameroon over time are presented in a language understood by the general public.²⁸ However, it would be a misconception to think that the Women Count gender statistics programme can help monitor statistics on the application of the penal code to gender-based violence. The specificity referred to in the 2019 Final Conclusions cannot be addressed by the programme, at least in its current formulation.

Some respondents noted that UN Women does not sufficiently target the underlying causes of gender inequality. The organization, in their opinion, opted for a consensual strategy that creates no controversy in its efforts to advance the implementation of existing projects. This would explain why UN Women does not put forward an openly feminist discourse. One participant noted that the term “feminist” is not championed by most gender activists in Cameroon.

The evaluation maintains that the Strategic Note and the national gender policy of Cameroon are inspired by a feminist perspective on egalitarianism. There is no doubt that some initiatives of UN Women Cameroon have contributed significantly to reducing inequalities between men and women, including their access to land. This was

²⁶ Law No. 2016/007 of 12 July 2016 on the penal code includes specific provisions on sexual harassment, female genital mutilation (article 277) and early marriage (article 120).

²⁷ p.6 – 2019 Conclusions of European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR).

²⁸ “Gender and dynamics of some key health indicators in Cameroon”, policy brief of May 2020. Its format and conciseness allow for a fairly wide dissemination to the general public.

the case in 2018–2019, with the economic empowerment initiative for rural women in Ntui and surrounding areas, which included a land ownership component.

Paraphrased, the question posed by the terms of reference of this evaluation on targeting the underlying causes of gender inequality amounts to asking: “Is UN-Women’s (feminist) work with national gender actors sufficient to reverse unequal relations between women and men in Cameroon?” This can be answered by referring to the actions suggested in 2014 by CEDAW. Admittedly, advocacy for the elimination of harmful practices such as child and forced marriages, female genital mutilation, breast ironing, widow stigmatization and widowhood rites are addressed, at least indirectly, by one of the outputs of the Strategic Note²⁹ under the impact area of Ending Gender-Based Violence.

However, while recognizing the transformative potential of the results generally targeted by the Strategic Note, the budget allocated to Ending Gender-Based Violence is insignificant (5 per cent), and the formulation of this intervention is not ambitious enough. In particular:

- (1) The output of the Strategic Note in question (Output CMR_D-3.1.4) concerns religious/traditional authorities and other opinion leaders and does not target the judiciary or legislative system;
- (2) The action is only to *inform about* harmful practices.

If these outputs are compared with the recommendations of the international treaty review committees,³⁰ including those of CEDAW in 2014, a clear gap in the Strategic Note can be observed. The following elements are either incorporated indirectly or simply absent from the list of Strategic Note results:

- Awareness to “repeal all provisions of the State party’s legislation that discriminate against women, in particular, the provisions of the Civil Code, as well as those related to the prohibition of certain jobs for women”,³¹
- Advocacy for the effectiveness of Cameroon’s legislation on women’s right to work, the prohibition of discrimination in hiring and the guarantee of decent working conditions.³²

4.1.2. Choice of partners

Finding 2.

In keeping with the intention behind the Flagship Programme Initiative UN Women Cameroon has signed partnership agreements with several government institutions and has significantly reduced the number of collaborative agreements with civil society organizations. The organization is thus perceived as distant from small civil society organizations. However, the latter are relatively closer to the most marginalized sectors of the population and recognized as having a leading role in mobilizing and drawing the attention of local authorities and, indirectly, national leaders.

UN Women relies on implementing partners³³ (the Government, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations) through LOAs and PCAs, as well as on strategic partners such as United Nations system agencies within the framework of joint programmes, the United Nations Country Team coordination mechanism as well as other technical and financial partners. All implementing partners and donors are presented in a mapping in Annex VIII of this report.

²⁹ Output CMR_D-3.1.4 “Religious, traditional and opinion leaders are provided with relevant information on harmful cultural practices impacting reproductive and maternal health”.

³⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2014) and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2019).

³¹ This committee urged Cameroon to take this type of measure (see “E / C.12 / CMR / CO / 4” pp. 4-6) because it “*notes with deep concern that harmful practices against women and girls remain widespread in the State party although they are prohibited by law (art. 10).*”

³² Ibid. p. 6.

³³ In addition, with regard to the financing of projects, UN Women has signed funding agreements with the Government of Sweden, the Swedish Development Agency, the Development Bank of Central African States, the African Development Bank, the Government of Japan and the Government of Italy.

³⁵ LOA: Local Organization Agreement; PCA: Project Cooperation Agreement

The different categories of partners can be described as follows:

State partners are the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family, the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, the Yoko Council, the Ntui Council and the Batchenga Council;

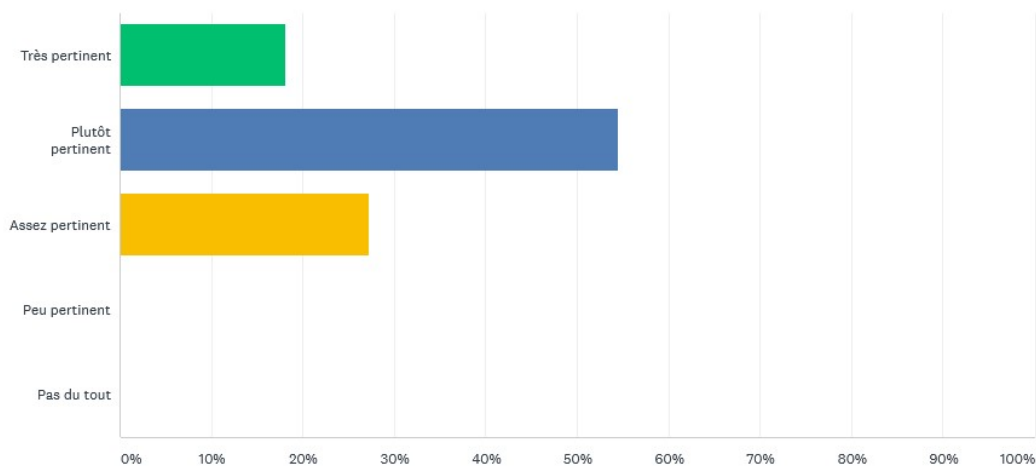
- Parastatal partners are the National Committee for the Fight against HIV/AIDS, the National Communication Council, the National Institute of Statistics, the Central Bureau for Censuses and Population Studies and Elections Cameroon;
- Non-governmental organizations are ALVF, LUKMEF, PDCVA, CAPEC and CAMYOSFOP;
- United Nations agencies are UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNESCO.

When asked about the choice of UN Women’s partners, most respondents deemed this choice “quite relevant”.

Figure 4.1.2. Relevance of UN Women choice of partners

(P5.1) - Le choix des partenaires par ONU Femmes - CMR est-il pertinent pour réaliser son mandat e...

Réponse(s) obtenue(s) : 11 Question(s) ignorée(s) : 0



ENQUÊTE SUR LA NOTE STRATÉGIQUE ONU FEMMES Cameroun 2018-2020

🚩 (0)

Source: Survey Monkey

The choice to work with different government ministries, including the Ministry of Gender and the Promotion of the Family, is not only justified by the intergovernmental foundation of the United Nations gender entity. By leveraging its capacities and advocacy for State ownership of the gender agenda, UN Women³⁴ also intends to make use of the real influence of the country’s “legitimate authority” (as mentioned during an interview) to bring about long term normative changes it proposes. This is therefore a strategic choice.

Different criteria were used to select civil society partners, including: competence in the impact area, geographical coverage and management skills. For example, ALVF is known for its expertise in combatting violence against women, both in the areas of prevention and the rehabilitation of gender-based violence survivors. To quote a description articulated during an interview with UN Women personnel, “*ALVF is a focused partner. Some non-governmental organizations want to do everything, but ALVF is focused on combatting gender-based violence. Their reporting capacity is quite high.*”

Following the Flagship Programme Initiative put in place by UN Women headquarters, several Country Offices significantly reduced the number of implementing partners to lower transaction costs. Flagship programs consist roughly in aggregating a multitude of small projects with the same theme into a single mega-project. Proponents of the switch to Flagship Programmes had described the former practice as a “confetti-like”, or piecemeal, programmatic

³⁴ UN Women in general, not only UN Women Cameroon.

approach. As a result, the number of partnerships with civil society organizations decreased significantly. Whereas in 2016 at least 12 non-governmental organizations³⁵ were implementing projects funded by UN Women, only half that number are currently in partnership with UN Women.

Some respondents did not appreciate this development. They emphasized that the technical competence of chosen non-governmental organizations should not entail the marginalization of small civil society organizations that work to defend a very noble cause, despite their heterogeneous nature: “The partners chosen by UN Women are relevant, but UN Women’s role is also to build the capacities of small organizations.”

This criticism is grounded on what is widely considered the *raison d’être* of UN Women. The United Nations gender entity owes its origins to the advocacy actions of the thousands of small organizations that united to make their voices heard at the United Nations Assembly, which led to the creation of UN Women in 2010.

UN Women has set up the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) as a consultative mechanism to facilitate regular dialogue with civil society. It is unclear whether the composition of CSAG is representative of the diversity of civil society. Furthermore, consultations with CSAG are not as frequent as originally intended.

UN Women Cameroon is further criticized for turning its back on small civil society organizations, as most of its collaboration agreements are signed with ministries and State institutions. In its partnership and resource mobilization plan, the Country Office dedicates a section to several ministries, describing the strategic and not necessarily monetary significance they respectively represent for UN Women. By contrast, only three sentences are dedicated to civil society. Thus, UN Women’s partnership approach with civil society is unspecific.

Without a doubt, the establishment of a gender friendly political and legal order is reliant on sovereign state institutions championing this cause. It is not less strategic for UN Women to sustain its organic relationship with civil society. For example, in November 2020, civil society weighed in to put pressure on the Government and demand transparency in public finances. This should have been an opportunity for UN Women to introduce its advocacy for gender-responsive budgeting.³⁶ By working more closely with civil society, UN Women would have given a democratic base to its gender budgeting programme because all of its interventions contribute to the empowerment of the most marginalized women by helping them move beyond mere beneficiary status to become actively engaged in addressing the underlying drivers of gender inequality.

4.1.3. Positioning and comparative advantage

Finding 3.

UN Women Cameroon’s positioning is most visible in the normative and coordination areas as well as in promoting gender statistics. UN Women inspires more expectations in interventions related to the normative and coordination dimensions of its integrated mandate. This perception, common

³⁵ MWIP, ALDEPA, ACAFJ, Public Concern, CAMYOSFOP, FEFPLEM, Collectif d’Associations de PVVIH, ASBY, WILFP, ACAFEJ, ALVF, FEFPLEM, ALDEPA

³⁶ Forum held from 24 to 25 November 2020 by a civil society consortium with government representation (Ministry of Finance).

This group of non-governmental organizations called for “the participation of the civil society in the implementation of the public finance reform”, especially “improving the management and transparency of public finances in the context of COVID-19.” This civil society pressure and dialogue group for the transparency of public finances is made up of COSADER, Afroleadership, CRADIF, I-WATCH, PLATEFORME Transparence Budgétaire, RESYPAT, NOLFOWO, Dynamique Citoyenne, CRADEC, PLANOSCAM, SC ; les Jeudis de Cotonou, Cabinet MTD, APAC, ROSFIP, ANCFM, UAOD, APESEC, RESIPAT, APINK, RESDECO, CERAGN, AGAD, FCJ, PPTE, SUN, CAPE, SEPDOBAD and CIDE.

among gender equality actors, is partly due to its withdrawal from the humanitarian zones of the North-West, South-West and Far North regions.

The normative component of UN Women attracts more expectations among gender stakeholders in Cameroon. For instance, we were told by UN staff that “UN Women is in a better position to campaign or raise public awareness.” This view is partly bolstered by the withdrawal to Yaoundé of personnel seconded to Maroua and Bamenda. Many perceive this withdrawal as a setback on the gains recorded prior to the ending of Japanese funding, and also in terms of positioning in the humanitarian field. UN Women has not been visible in some of the consultation meetings, probably due to the low number of personnel.

Interviewed donors emphasized the usefulness of UN Women’s presence.

“The organization was filling the gender expertise gap in the humanitarian field. Not all United Nations agencies are gender sensitive; the presence of UN Women in the humanitarian field ensured gender mainstreaming into United Nations interventions. We do not get to see or hear UN Women in the humanitarian meetings any more.”

Interviewees recognized, however, that UN Women Cameroon’s limited financial resources prevent it from supporting coordinated protection in conflict situations or ensuring rapid interventions against gender-based violence. We will see that UN Women’s withdrawal from humanitarian areas limits the use of the geographic coverage argument to mobilize resources.

According to participants from civil society, UN Women is not a regular United Nations agency. It quite naturally champions the aspirations of gender equality activists. The 16 Days of Activism campaigns, the HeforShe initiative, and support for adherence to international commitments on women’s rights are all areas where the positioning of UN Women Cameroon is widely recognized.

It should be noted that donors recognize the coordinating role of UN Women. One donor encouraged UN Women to extend this role to civil society by becoming more involved with the women’s movement, not just ministries: “UN Women should enhance its collaboration with civil society organizations.” This would certainly establish a channel to communicate the demands of the women’s movement to executive circles.

Box 4.1.3

MOST COMMON PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF UN WOMEN IN CAMEROON

UN Women has a clear comparative advantage in the following areas:

- ☐ Gender advocacy, sensitization and mobilization agency;
- ☐ Gender capacity-building agency;
- ☐ Gender expertise hub disseminating knowledge and statistical data on gender;
- ☐ Technical and financial partner of the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family;
- ☐ Convenor and catalytic intermediary between the women’s movement and the Government.

Even with UN Women Cameroon’s relatively modest budget, its role cannot be limited to the normative. When asked about this, UN Women personnel expressed that this would be a misunderstanding of the interdependence of the normative with the other two dimensions of its integrated mandate. UN Women would be failing in its role if it focused solely on organizing campaigns and advocacy on gender norms, laws and policies in Cameroon. UN Women’s added value also stems from the implementation of joint projects with other United Nations agencies. UN Women is recognized across various institutions in Cameroon for its contribution to gender statistics, including its ongoing work on the Gender Demographic Dividend Index of Cameroon.

Most personnel from United Nations agencies did not question the coordinating role of UN Women.³⁷ This is because UN Women Cameroon plays a key role³⁸ within the Gender Thematic Group and the United Nations system

³⁷ In 2016, during the evaluation of the previous Strategic Note, acceptance of UN Women’s coordination mandate was less clear. Not all United Nations agencies felt that UN Women should coordinate the United Nations system’s contribution to achieving gender equality.

³⁸ The Cameroon Country Office is a member of 22 thematic bodies or groups and leads two of them; the PMT and the Gender Thematic Group. See table in the Appendix entitled “UN Women Cameroon in Working Groups and Joint Initiatives between 2018 and 2020”.

Programme Management Team (PMT) co-chaired by the Country Office Representative. This positioning allows for gender issues to be put on the agenda, including during the planning process of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025 as part of alignment efforts with the newly adopted National Development Strategy 2020–2030. A Cooperation Office from a donor country suggested that this coordination role could be strengthened by conducting joint resource mobilization strategies to limit the perception of inter-agency competition that currently prevails.

4.1.4. Adaptation

Finding 4.

The flexibility and adaptability³⁹ of the UN Women Cameroon Country Office to changing or unforeseen circumstances was demonstrated by its rapid response to demands following the COVID-19 pandemic.

While maintaining overall implementation of ongoing projects, in particular the Women Count and Second Chance Education initiatives, UN Women Cameroon responded to urgent needs related to COVID-19 by adjusting its⁴⁰ spending plan of core funds and by leveraging its gender coordination role in the United Nations system. This was the case for the project on support to women's socioeconomic activities around value chains induced by COVID-19 in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon.

To curb losses caused by declining demand for clothing items during the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Women supported rapid transformation of sewing workshops to become fit for the production of protective masks. This was made possible by collaboration with UNICEF to jointly support a small women's enterprise (20 employees) in Yaoundé to produce washable masks.⁴¹ While this is remarkable at community level, this initiative should be scaled up to significantly contribute to reducing contagion at the level of councils in Yaoundé, or even considerably higher to cover a significant portion of the national population.

By contrast, the programme on the production of antiseptic soap and hydroalcoholic gel⁴² that was carried out in Bamenda and Buea during the summer of 2020 may have more significant results. These activities are sustainable because the programme includes a training of trainers component at the end of the workshops to ensure the continuity and expansion of the teachings. The programme is also providing an alternative source of income during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2. EFFECTIVENESS

4.2.1. Overview of the level of performance indicators by impact area

Finding 5.

UN Women Cameroon has largely demonstrated its capacity to achieve expected results. Between 2018 and 2020, there was an upward trend in the values of outcome and output indicators. According to data from the RMS, the level of achievement of outcome indicator targets between 2018 and 2019 was approximately 43 per cent for outputs and 32 per cent for outcomes

As mentioned above, the evaluation team did not have the opportunity to verify in the field the validity of the figures. The performance analysis here for each of the five impact areas of the Strategic Note is based on the assumption⁴³ that values entered in the RMS by UN Women Cameroon personnel between 2018 and 2019 are accurate.

If the completion rate (CR) is defined as the ratio of the number of targets achieved to the number of targets set, the progress reported as achieved can be calculated as follows:

³⁹ Or "dynamic relevance".

⁴⁰ This adaptation did not necessarily involve reformulating the results of the Strategic Note.

⁴¹ On 23 July 2020 a ceremony was organized in the conference room of the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family to officially donate 30,000 reusable barrier masks. This is the result of a joint UNICEF-UN Women programme to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable women and girls.

⁴² At the regional level, as of July 2020, there were 2,137 participants (2,120 women and 17 men) trained in 8 online interactive sessions on the making of antiseptic soap and hydroalcoholic gel. Source: <https://africa.unwomen.org/fr/digital-library/publications/2020/09/riposte-covid-19-au-senegal>.

⁴³ See section 1.3.6, "Challenges and limitations of this evaluation", of this report.

$$CR = \frac{(\text{Number of targets exceeded or achieved}) \times 100}{\text{Total number of targets}}$$

Given that the data available in the RMS covers only two years of implementation out of the three year span of the Strategic Note (2018–2020), performance in 2020 has been estimated on the basis of a two-tier scale, that is “Sufficient” (if CR>67%) and “Insufficient” (if CR<67%), under the assumption of a uniform annual distribution. In addition, it is possible to assess the likelihood of the desired results being achieved in 2020 by calculating the CR gap to 100, i.e. the quantity between the CR and 100.

The overall value of outcome and output indicators for all five impact areas between 2018 and 2019 is therefore 32 per cent and 43 per cent respectively (Table 5.1). This means that the level of effectiveness for each of the indicators was considered insufficient. The Women’s Economic Empowerment impact area has the lowest completion rates for outcome and output indicators (0 per cent and 13 per cent). The evaluation team initially thought the level of outcome indicators for this area was omitted. The team was aware⁴⁴ that the Country Office achieved tangible results during the period 2018–2020, notably as part of the Second Chance Education programme. However, it was revealed that the indicators for Second Chance Education are listed separately under the distinct impact area of Frontier Issues. As the RMS shows⁴⁵ very little expenditure in 2020 in the area of Women’s Economic Empowerment, it can be argued that the low level of its output indicators is consistent with the lack of disbursements for projects in this area.⁴⁶

Conversely, the area of Women’s Leadership and Political Participation stands out, as it has the highest completion rate across all indicators. Its outcome and output indicators stand at 45 per cent and 68 per cent respectively. By way of example, a detailed description of the evolution of the indicators in the area of Women’s Leadership and Political Participation is provided below.⁴⁷

The two outcome indicators for Women’s Leadership and Political Participation (Figure 4.2.1a) indicate that no change was observed in 2018. In contrast, in 2019, for the 9 outcome indicators, 5 (56 per cent) of them witnessed significant change, while one outcome indicator (11 per cent) witnessed relative progress and 3 outcome indicators (33 per cent) showed no change. These figures indicate that between 2018 and 2020, there was a significant change in the number of outcome indicators whose targets had been met or exceeded.

With regard to the Women’s Leadership and Political Participation output indicators, the evaluation team observed once again that the first two years (2018 and 2019) of UN Women operations in Cameroon did not show immediate results for these indicators (Figure 4.2.1b).

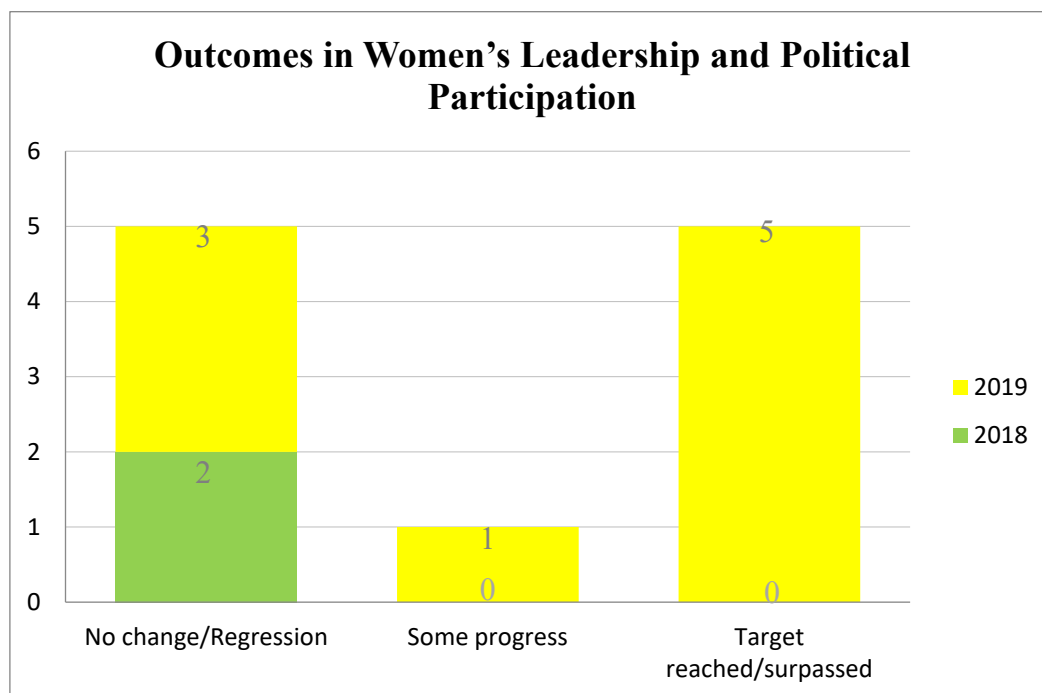
⁴⁴ The progress reports of the Second Chance Education programme were confirmed by the external midterm review of the programme: *Midterm Review of the “Second Chance Education” Programme for United Nations Women March–July 2020*.

⁴⁵ The RMS also reflects figures from Atlas, the financial database of UN Women.

⁴⁶ Including the Gender-Road and Agricultural Value Chains projects funded by banks through the Ministries of Public Works and Agriculture. The last disbursement of funds from the African Development Bank was in December 2016.

⁴⁷ The details of the other result areas have been included in Appendix I.

Figure 4.2.1a. Performance indicators in Women's Leadership and Political Participation (2018, 2019)

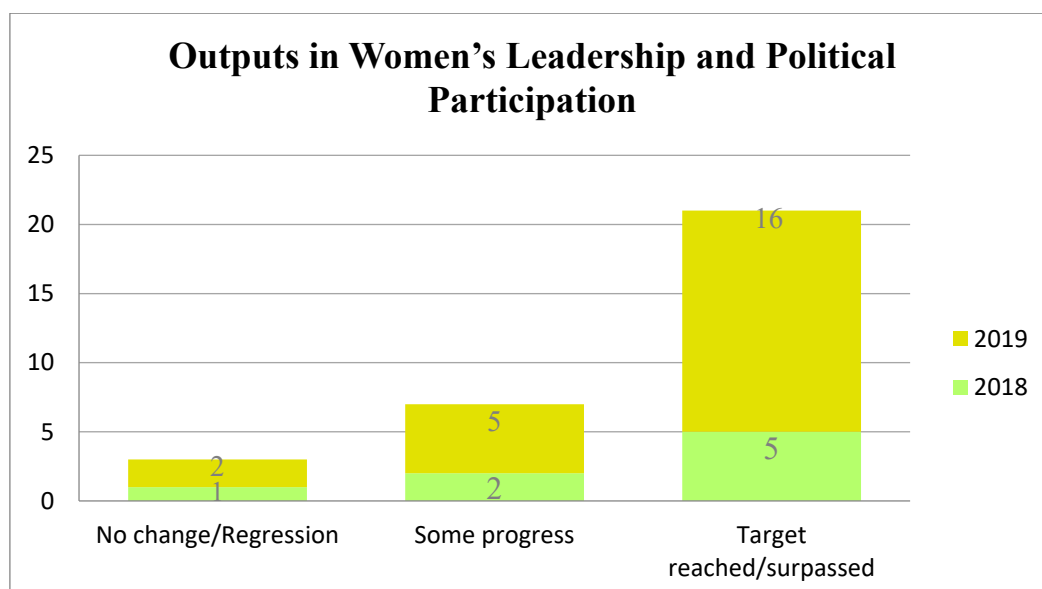


Source: RMS

Thus, for the eight output indicators of *Women's Leadership and Political Participation* in 2018, no change was observed for one of the indicators (12 per cent) and some progress was noted for two indicators (25 per cent), while significant progress was noted for five other indicators (63 per cent). Lastly, in 2019, 16 (70 per cent) of the output indicators in this area reported significant progress, while while some progress was noted for 5 indicators (21 per cent), and 2 indicators (9 per cent) respectively.

These results reveal that Women's Leadership and Political Participation is the only impact area for which the online RMS showed the best ratio of "achieved/exceeded" output indicator targets.

Figure 4.2.1b. Output indicators in Women's Leadership and Political Participation (2018, 2019)



Source: RMS

The evaluation team initially believed that the lack of change in 2018 despite the volume of investment was the result of social and political resistance to efforts aimed at women's political participation. However, this assumption does not help explain the contrast with results observed in 2019. For if a relatively slow pace of change in women's political participation is to be expected elsewhere in Cameroon, it would be surprising to see such sudden positive changes in outcomes in the space of a year as those observed above.

In fact, the explanation is simpler. During the development of the Strategic Note, the heading "Leadership and Political Participation" was used, but only four outputs that actually target the leadership of Cameroonian women were listed. These outputs account for a relatively small proportion of the budget (only 8 per cent in 2020). The rest of the results under this area were mainly⁵² dedicated to gender mainstreaming of statistics and, to a lesser extent,⁵³ to the inclusion of HIV and menstrual hygiene in plans, policies and budgets at national and local levels. As such, the outstanding performance initially associated with political participation is mainly due to⁴⁸ the dynamism of UN Women Cameroon's gender and statistics programme.

4.2.2. Key results of various impact areas

The main achievements⁴⁹ of the UN Women Cameroon Office are described below.

❖ Key results in Governance, including gender statistics

Presently, it is noted that in Cameroon 10 per cent of mayors are women, 26 per cent of senators are women and 34 per cent of parliamentary seats are held by women. The specific contribution of UN Women to these results is not clear, especially since the share of funds allocated to political participation is very low (4 per cent). However, according to many respondents, women's political participation in elections, particularly during the 2018 elections, reflects the efforts of UN Women and its partners in this area.

The role of Elections Cameroon, a UN Women partner, in implementing quotas for women has resulted in 31 per cent of women in Parliament, 26 per cent of women in the Senate and 8 per cent of women in the executive branch of municipalities. Political parties signed circulars to ensure that women headed political lists during legislative and municipal elections in 2020. In addition to these achievements, 100 women candidates and political party leaders were trained⁵⁰ in electoral law, the importance of women's participation in political decision-making positions, the value of women in politics, political leadership and governance. These measures and activities led to a significant increase in the proportion of women parliamentarians, senators and councillors during the 2013–2018 period.

Under the Governance component, a normative framework on gender statistics in Cameroon has been adopted to regularly produce data for a minimum list of indicators. With the support of UN Women through its Women Count programme, 141 actors of the National Statistical System were trained on gender statistics in 2019 and 2020.⁵¹ The major national statistical operations, notably the General Population and Housing Census and the General Census of Agriculture and Livestock will certainly benefit from this gender sensitization programme.

In addition, UN Women has put in place a network of journalists and communicators on gender statistics in Cameroon and later conducted training⁵² on visualization techniques that was attended by demographers and statisticians.

⁴⁸ This conclusion is not only due to the modest share of Leadership and Political Participation itself in the total number of outputs of outcome 1 or in the budget of this outcome. This is because, even from an expenditure point of view, one output of Leadership and Political Participation (CMR_D_1.2.3) out of the four outputs recorded no expenditure during the entire duration of the Strategic Note, i.e. 2018–2020.

⁴⁹ The results discussed here are taken from the annual reports of UN Women Cameroon.

⁵⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/1716176881954641/posts/2514583882113933/>.

⁵¹ UN Women Newsletter Q3, July to September 2020.

⁵² UN WOMEN Newsletter Q3, July to September 2020

❖ Key results in Women's Economic Empowerment

UN Women planned specifically in the Women's Economic Empowerment impact area that by 2020 "women will enjoy income security, decent work and autonomy". The main project in this area is entitled "Support to specific and entrepreneurial activities of women: Gender promotion and acceleration of women's economic empowerment along the Batchenga-Ntui-Yoko-Lena road project". The project was greatly affected by delays in the disbursement of fund instalments. The delay did compromise farming activities that were originally scheduled in February which is the right season for planting some crops. One participant in the discussion sessions for this evaluation observed: "Maize cannot be planted in June, so we had to change crops. The funds arrived too late relative to the seasonal cycle."

That being said, a *Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in Road Projects* was developed and disseminated among road construction stakeholders. In addition, a simplified *Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in Agricultural Cooperatives in Cameroon* was developed in 2019. In 2018, the project reached out to 77 women living along the highway, helping them to obtain land titles (52) and land permits (25) with the aim of increasing women's access to land ownership and securing agricultural production to increase income. This figure, though modest, can provide an empirical basis for advocacy with local or national governments and other development stakeholders to scale up the initiative for large-scale transformative effects.

❖ Key results in Ending Violence Against Women

In the impact area of Ending Violence Against Women, UN Women focused its activities on capacity-building in support to public institutions and civil society. In 2019, 30 gender desk officers based in the North-West and South-West regions were trained in the protection of women against gender-based violence. In the same year, 57 members of the security forces (gendarmes and police officers), comprising 50 women and 7 men, were trained on humanitarian principles and protection against gender-based violence in the Far North Region. In the North-West and South-West regions, 500 members of the security forces, comprising 250 police officers and 250 gendarmes, underwent the same type of capacity-building.

In 2018, 32 instructors from the national gendarmerie and 6 gender desk officers were trained on gender mainstreaming in security issues. Similarly, in the North-West Region, 35 women, 10 men and 5 traditional leaders were trained in carrying out and giving feedback on security audits, combined with risk and vulnerability mapping.

The international outreach of UN Women's work materialized when the coordinator of one of UN Women's partner organizations, Ms. Aissa Doumara Ngatansou (ALVF), was awarded the Simone Veil Prize in the context of combating violence against women.

❖ Key results in Humanitarian Action, Peace and Security

UN Women Cameroon ensured gender mainstreaming in United Nations agencies' humanitarian response by developing the *Training Manual for Women Mediators for Peace and Social Cohesion*, available in French and English. The Country Office carried out training in 2019 for 150 heads of organizations on how to respond to violence, conflict situations, mediation and resolution. In 2018, the same type of training was given to 43 gender focal points, 102 humanitarian actors and 112 programme officers from United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations.⁵³

❖ Key results in Frontier Issues

Through the *Second Chance Education* project, UN Women Cameroon enabled marginalized people to acquire new skills to undertake small-scale economic activities or access professional opportunities. The majority of beneficiaries were living in precarious situations (internally displaced persons, refugees, host populations) and had

⁵³ UN Women Cameroon 2018 Annual Report.

dropped out of traditional school settings. This intervention was rolled out to 10,348 people (4,000 men and 6,348 women) and comprised distributing start-up kits and providing vocational training (in agriculture, livestock, entrepreneurship and small trade).

4.2.3. Results monitoring and accountability system

Finding 6.

The RMS of UN Women Cameroon does not provide sufficient information about progress towards the expected results of Strategic Note implementation.

At times, the RMS can be misleading. Its indicators related to the Women's Economic Empowerment impact area appeared as "ON TRACK" for outputs whose implementation had been suspended for three years.

The virtual absence of field missions does not allow UN Women Cameroon to monitor and report accurately on progress towards results. There have been no surveys/studies on baseline data for the portfolio's indicators. This has deprived UN Women of the opportunity to reliably compare baseline data with data about the outcomes of its interventions.

In addition, the cash advances to partners are not always broken down in instalments conditional upon validation of implementation. This does not help the monitoring of results or the traceability of expenditure.

The evaluation team is not aware of any baseline study undertaken by the Country Office on the Strategic Note 2018–2020⁵⁴. This would have allowed for a comparison of data collected in the field with baseline data. The lack of tangible data reported on the RMS was noted by the internal⁵⁵ midterm review exercise. This is corroborated by interviews, which noted the virtual absence of a results monitoring mission, as well as a desk review, which did not identify any documentation accounting for (or narrating) monitoring missions. This is probably due to limited staffing, which implies heavy workloads and reduces the likelihood of conducting field visits.

Various⁵⁶ stakeholders interviewed observed the weakness in reporting. For example, the report on the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) did not sufficiently highlight the achievement of the targets of UN Women Cameroon's expected activities. It was regretted that the Country Office did not communicate on non-implementation of the so-called cashactivities⁵⁷ that were budgeted with CERF funds.

Generally, donors appreciated regular updates from UN Women in the form of newsletters; however, some donors felt that the reports should inform about the country situation, described through a gender perspective. They also noted that progress reports lack figures on the level of achievement relative to targets, especially on results achieved "after all these training sessions and workshops". This is particularly the case for reports on projects funded by Italy reports.

This perception of weak monitoring and reporting was confirmed by a significant proportion (27 per cent) of participants in the survey conducted as part of this evaluation. Participants observed that the current monitoring system is not suitable to show progress made as a result of UN Women interventions. Only 8 per cent of UN Women personnel surveyed consider the monitoring system to be "very suitable", while 65 per cent considered it "somewhat suitable" (Figure 5.3).

Furthermore, the fact that RMS output indicators on Women's Economic Empowerment continue to appear in orange, i.e. indicating that work is "ON TRACK", is in contradiction with the three-year interruption of economic

⁵⁴ The team found no trace of any baseline report from the preceding strategic note. Yet, for instance, the CO had previously planned to *Carry out baseline study and establish a database of gender indicators of the highway and update it annually, produce a gender report on the contribution of the road project in reducing gender inequalities* [Strategic Note (2014-2017), DRF Activity 2.2.3.4]

⁵⁵ The review is said to be "internal" because stakeholders were not present.

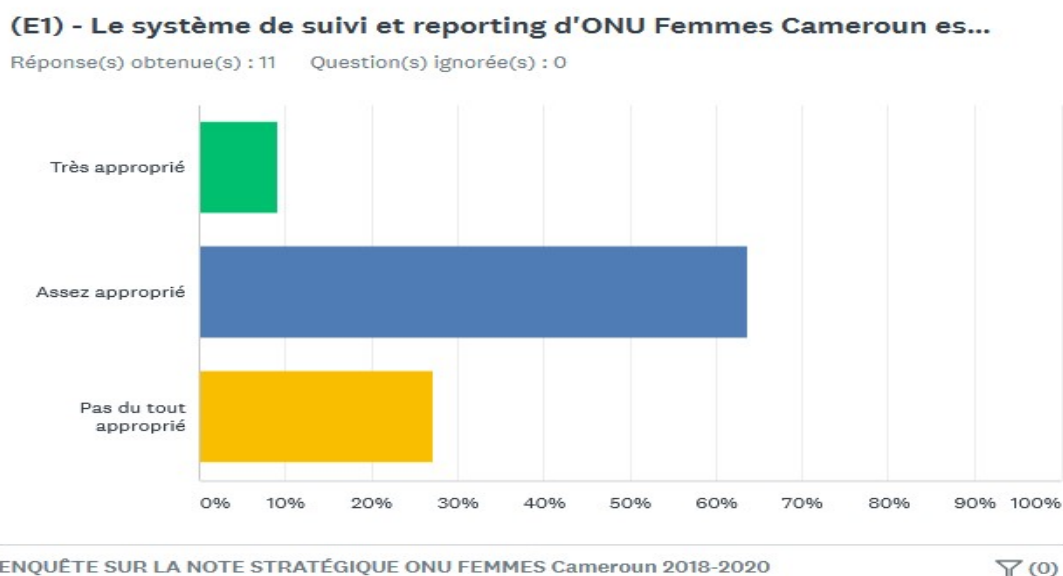
⁵⁶ Individual interviews with colleagues in the United Nations system and with several donors.

⁵⁷ This is essentially a cash distribution programme to people in special need.

empowerment activities following the failure of the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Agriculture to disburse expected funds.

Lastly, several of survey respondents expressed a desire for UN Women to proceed more cautiously with funds advanced to partners. They proposed that funding should be disbursed in instalments according to progress in achieving outputs rather than entrusting the entirety of a project's funds to a particular ministry. Participants noted that other United Nations agencies do not make one-off disbursements for an entire project but rather disburse funds in instalments after satisfactory completion of deliverables.

Figure 4.2.3. Ownership of the Cameroon Country Office monitoring and reporting system to demonstrate progress on its gender equality and women empowerment activities



Source: Survey monkey

4.2.4. Factors that influence performance

Finding 7.

The evaluation identified three unexpected outcomes. These most likely resulted from UN Women Cameroon's convening power around its unique mandate, as well as fruitful collaboration with the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family and various government bodies. The evaluation also recognizes the flexibility and adaptability of Country Office personnel to changing contexts.

❖ **Supporting factors**

In terms of achieving planned results, implementing partners and UN Women personnel recognized a number of success factors. These include:

- Flexibility and adaptation to changing contexts, particularly the situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and made possible by the technical skills of UN Women Cameroon personnel;
- Enabling environment for collaboration with government authorities combined with the right choice of partners to implement Strategic Note activities, particularly in the North-West and South-West regions;
- Country Office capacity to bring together and rally diverse actors, as demonstrated by the Women Count programme, which has earned UN Women Cameroon its current prominence in relation to gender statistics. As such,

UN Women is a stakeholder in the National Statistical System, which places it in a favourable position to monitor Sustainable Development Goals⁵⁸ from a gender perspective.

These factors contributed to the achievement of three positive unexpected results during implementation of the Strategic Note. These include:

1. Facilitating the issuance of 308⁵⁹ birth certificates to children who were not officially registered. This action bolstered the credibility to UN Women's community work.
2. Commitment of traditional and religious leaders. For example, a traditional chief made several hectares of land available⁶⁰ to beneficiaries of UN Women's Gender-Road Project. This action contributed to women's access to land in an environment that was previously unprepared for female landownership. Sixty-five women's groups gained access to land through the implementation of the Women's Economic Empowerment programme.
3. Success in responding to COVID-19⁶¹ by providing the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family with 30,000⁶² masks, building the capacity of vulnerable women to produce⁶³ and sell masks, and generating knowledge about COVID-19 through the national survey developed and implemented with the Central Bureau of Census and Population Studies.⁶⁴

❖ **Hindering factors**

There were several challenges that may have inhibited UN Women's contribution to its Strategic Note objectives. These include:

- The small size of the actual workforce. There are many vacant positions in the Country Office's organizational chart.
- Insufficient allocation or disbursement of financial resources for implementing activities, particularly for the Gender-Road Project component of the Women's Economic Empowerment impact area and the areas of Ending Violence Against Women and Women's Political Participation.
- The small number of joint projects, particularly in the humanitarian field
- Insufficient on-site monitoring and support of implementing partners in the field. This has been especially challenging since the return to Yaoundé of personnel who were originally deployed in the North-West, South-West and Far North regions. The Country Office cannot always rely on partners' access to communication technologies.
- The short duration of interventions, which does not allow for tangible results to be achieved.
- Delays in making funds available for implementing partners.
- Absence or weak presence of UN Women in crisis zones, which did not facilitate the allocation of CERF funds earmarked for activities in these crisis zones.
- The profile of the Gender Focal Points, both at the UN Gender Theme Group and also within the Humanitarian Task Force, not always corresponding with the required profile and therefore not facilitating decision-making or implementation. This is compounded by their professional instability, which affects continuity and results in the need for additional training sessions.

PERCEPTIONS ON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PERFORMANCE

The graph below summarizes perceptions gathered during the survey. It confirms that the following factors, in descending order, are most conducive to achieving results:

- Government's role in gender equality through the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family (91 per cent);

⁵⁸ Individual interview, UN Women personnel.

⁵⁹ UN Women Cameroon 2019 Annual Report.

⁶⁰ Individual interview, UN Women personnel.

⁶¹ UN Women Newsletter Q3, July to September 2020.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

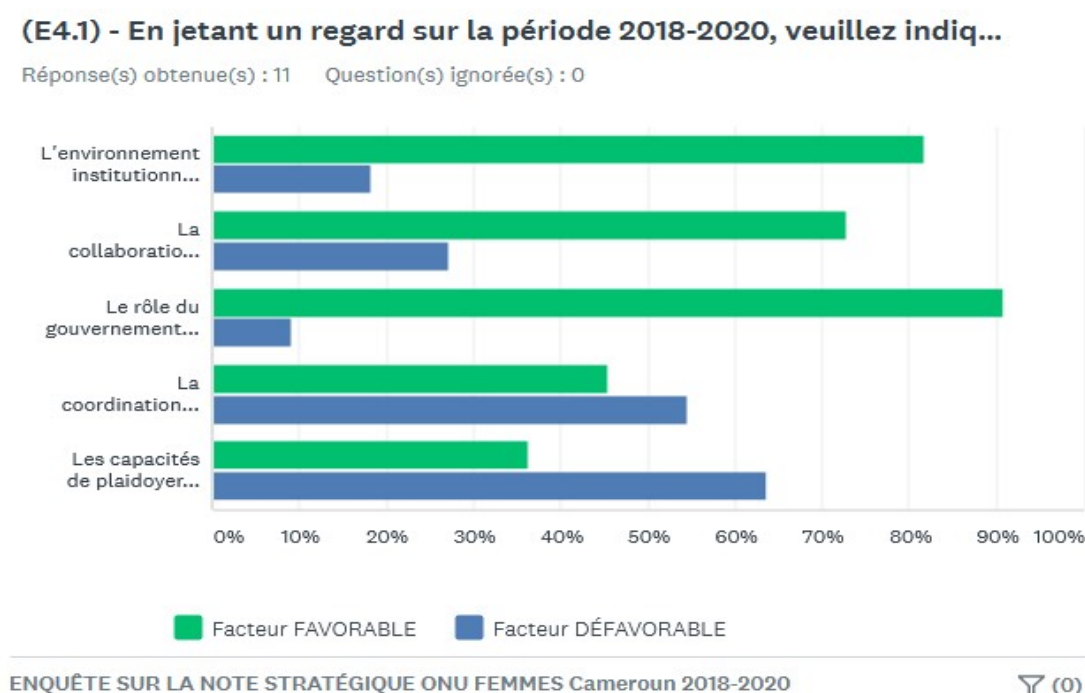
⁶⁴ Individual interview, UN Women and personnel of the Central Bureau of Census and Population Studies (BUCREP).

- Institutional environment (i.e., the context of laws and policies) related to gender equality and women's empowerment (82 per cent);
- United Nations inter-agency collaboration on gender equality under the leadership of UN Women (82 per cent).

On the other hand, according to the online survey, UN Women advocacy capacity was the least supportive factor for achieving the outcomes of the 2018–2020 Strategic Note. This is surprising given the views expressed during the interviews, which cited major campaigns such as the 16 Days of Activism, HeForShe, International Women's Day and the successful appeal to sister agencies for joint initiatives targeting women affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as instances of successful advocacy. When asked about this negative perception, personnel noted how difficult it was for UN Women Cameroon to persuade the Government to release funds and resume the Gender-Road Project, which had been interrupted for the previous three years.

Fifty-five per cent of survey respondents criticized the coordination of civil society organizations on gender equality and women's empowerment; however the evaluation team did not have the opportunity to verify or explain this during the evaluation.

Figure 4.2.4. Factors supporting or hindering the achievement of results of the Strategic Note 2018–2020, according to implementing partners and UN Women personnel



4.2.5. Contribution to United Nations coordination on gender

Finding 8.

The influence of UN Women Cameroon is widely considered catalytic within different coordination sub-groups of the United Nations system, such as the Gender Theme Group. While this presence was felt during preparation of the United Nations System Development Coordination Framework, the reduced size of the Country Office's human resources has affected continuity.

UN Women continues to assert its normative agency in terms of gender coordination within the United Nations system. This representation is widely associated with UN Women's work on gender mainstreaming in the new United Nations System Development Cooperation Framework 2021–2025, and its advocacy for gender-sensitive

humanitarian response. The Country Office's work is also visible in the Gender Thematic Group⁶⁵ and the Civil Society Organizations Working Group on Gender and Public Policy in Cameroon including two networks of sectoral gender focal points in Yaoundé and Maroua.

In addition, since 2018, UN Women has been following up on the implementation of the United Nations Country Team's United Nations System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard. In this regard, a congratulatory letter⁶⁶ from UN Women's Executive Director was sent in October 2019 to the United Nations Country Team in relation to the achievement of results in several areas, including:

- Mainstreaming gender equality into UNDAF outcomes to the extent that a gender-focused outcome in UNDAF 2018–2020 clearly explains how gender equality and empowerment will be promoted in line with SDG priorities, including SDG 5;
- Changes in gender equality as measured by 34 per cent of the UNDAF indicators.

In 2019, UN Women assumed the United Nations system role of Head of the Programme Management Team, which offered the opportunity to coordinate formulation of UNDAF 2021–2025 with an emphasis on gender equality. High-level advocacy is currently under way⁶⁷ for more financial resources to be dedicated to gender activities. This involves convincing United Nations agencies to allocate a percentage of funds (e.g., 15 per cent, as is the case for the World Food Programme) to specific gender activities.

However, only two joint programmes relating to the Peace Building Fund (UNESCO/UNDP/UN Women) and one under COVID-19⁶⁸ (UNDP/UN Women) were implemented during the period under evaluation. This is far from the target of 30 per cent budget allocation to joint programmes, and no joint programme addresses humanitarian issues.

That said, gender awareness in the humanitarian sector is an area in which a remarkable amount of work was invested. The pooling of two networks (humanitarian and development) and the participation of civil society organizations in the Gender Theme Group have enabled more fluid coordination of humanitarian actions.

Similarly, the increased inclusion of the Gender with Age Marker in project development at country level strengthened gender mainstreaming⁶⁹ into humanitarian action.

CONTRIBUTING TO INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION (PERCEPTIONS)

A quantification of perceptions about the contribution of the UN Women Cameroon Country Office to strengthening inter-agency coordination on gender, both at the development and humanitarian levels, is consistent with the above analyses (Figure 4.2.5). For example, the role of UN Women in mobilizing the gender agenda and mainstreaming gender in activities was mostly seen as having “considerably contributed” (27 per cent) to strengthening inter-agency coordination on gender. On the other hand, the performance of the criteria “Coherence of gender equality and women empowerment activities” and “Gender Accountability, notably through the SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard” is such that only 18 per cent of the respondents said that they had significantly contributed to inter-agency coordination.

⁶⁵ The Gender Thematic Group remains the main channel, together with the sister agencies of the United Nations system (UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF), for carrying out the 16 Days of Activism campaigns against gender-based violence in 2018 and 2019.

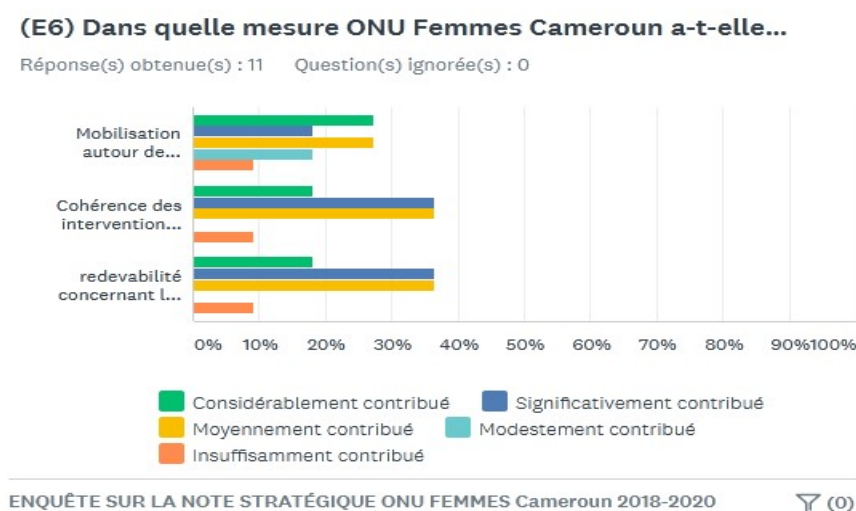
⁶⁶ Letter from Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Deputy Secretary General and Executive Director.

⁶⁷ Personal interview with the Resident Coordinator.

⁶⁸ UN Women Newsletter Q3, July to September 2020. The results of the implementation of the programme related to COVID-19 entitled “Support to women's socioeconomic activities around COVID-19 induced value chains in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon” are available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6chMFLl8r78&feature=youtu.be> and highlighted in UN Women Newsletter Q3, July to September 2020.

⁶⁹ This was made possible by the training in 2019 of 127 humanitarian and development actors, including 77 women and 50 men, using tools such as CARE's rapid gender analysis, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Gender with Age Marker and the Food and Agriculture Organization's socioeconomic analysis tool (UN Women Newsletter Q3, July to September 2020).

Figure 4.2.5. Contribution to strengthening inter-agency coordination relating to gender at development and humanitarian levels



4.3. EFFICIENCY

4.3.1. Allocation of budget and human resources

Finding 9.

The share of funds reserved for Women's Economic Empowerment appears disproportionate compared with the very small allocations for the Elimination of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and Women's Political Participation. This budget allocation according to the thematic areas of the country portfolio is not optimal for helping Cameroonian women emancipate themselves from discriminatory norms.

It is not easy to grasp budget allocation by only consulting the online databases, mainly Atlas and the RMS. Both platforms suffer from terminology issues, especially concerning the area dedicated to Women's Leadership and Political Participation, which is identified as project "SPF2 O1.1 Legislative" in Atlas and as "Women's Leadership and Political Participation" in the RMS. In fact, the latter platform brings together what is separate and separates what should not be. The RMS brings together what is separate because under the acronym "LPP" are consolidated allocations known to be under Governance in general, i.e. Leadership and Political Participation, Norms, Gender and HIV and Women Count. In the RMS, budget data for the Second Chance Education project is disaggregated from that earmarked for Women's Economic Empowerment, yet 100 per cent of Second Chance Education activities relate to the economic dimension of the UN Women country programme.

For clarity, the evaluation team made the following adjustments:

- Amounts allocated for Women's Economic Empowerment were added to those of Second Chance Education and classified under the new expenditure category WEE-SCE.
- SPF2 O1.1 Legislative funds were subtracted from the Women's Leadership and Political Participation amounts to obtain the rLPP and GOV budget figures. The aggregate of Governance funds as distinct from Women's Political Participation shall be referred to as "GOV". These funds are dedicated to non-political participation interventions, i.e. Norms, Gender and HIV and Women Count.

We now have the following distribution:

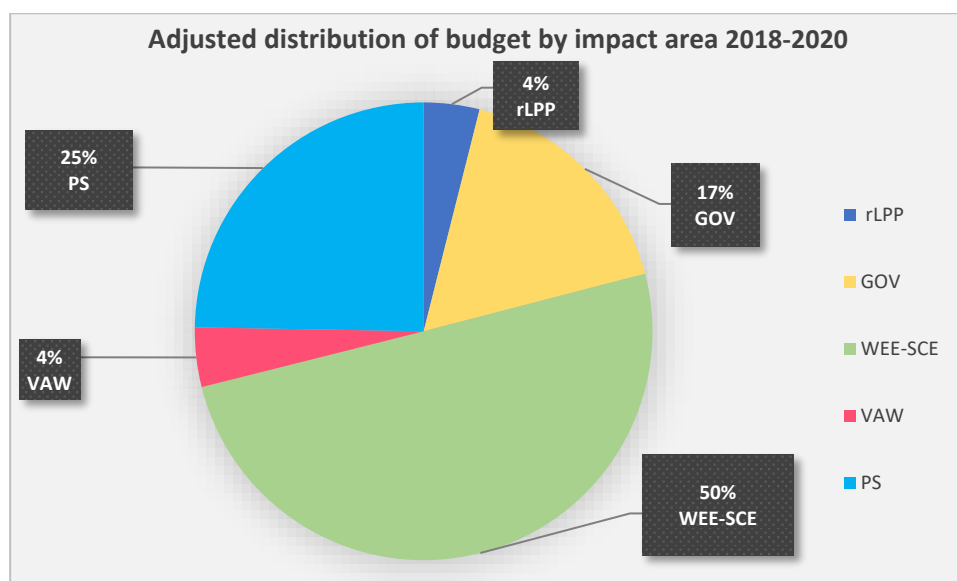
Table 4.3.1. Adjusted distribution (US\$) of the budget by impact area of the Strategic Note 2018–2020

rLPP	GOV	WEE-SCE	VAW	PS
340,081	1,469,361	4,329,783	362,594	2,135,472

Source: Atlas, 14 December 2020.

A further breakdown of Governance funds would have highlighted the low figures allocated to Norms over the period 2018–2020.

Figure 4.3.1. Adjusted distribution (%) of the budget by impact area of the Strategic Note 2018–2020



Source: Atlas, 14 December 2020.

Calculations⁷⁰ show that impact areas *Elimination of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence* and *Women's Leadership and Political Participation* each account for 4 per cent of the budget of UN Women Cameroon's activities, while half of the allocations went to Women's Economic Empowerment.

Strictly speaking, it cannot be said that activities relating to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence or Women's Leadership and Political Participation each amount to 4 per cent of the budget. This figure should be increased because peace and security programmes in humanitarian zones include aspects of the fight against gender-based violence and participation in peace negotiations. The fact remains that relative allocations of 4 per cent do not meet the needs of Cameroonian women in terms of leadership and political participation and sexual and gender-based violence, especially those living outside the humanitarian or conflict context.

The 50 per cent share reserved for women's empowerment activities clearly unbalances UN Women's response to the challenges posed by gender inequalities in Cameroon. The focus on economic support, at the expense of other dimensions, keeps women at the lowest stages of Sara H. Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework.⁷¹ The framework distinguishes five stages in the path to women's emancipation. The Welfare level is the target of economic activities whose only effect is to increase income. This uncontroversial level is also consistent with the order of unequal relations between women and men. The second level, Access to Resources, is less acceptable insofar as it tends to disrupt males' predominant share. The level Awareness emerges beyond purely economic aspects of programming: at this stage, women recognize the systemic nature of their exclusion and are prepared to commit themselves to obtaining the Control level, which is associated with true Empowerment, or the highest level of autonomy that cannot be reduced to economic aspects alone.

⁷⁰ For detailed calculations, see Appendix V.

⁷¹ Women Empowerment Framework.

4.3.2. Country Office programme management structure

Finding 10.

Personnel departures have affected the institutional memory of UN Women Cameroon. The high number of vacancies hinders the smooth implementation of the Strategic Note. The small size of its Operations Unit leads to delays in approving and executing transactions, including those related to procurement, recruitment and advances to partners.

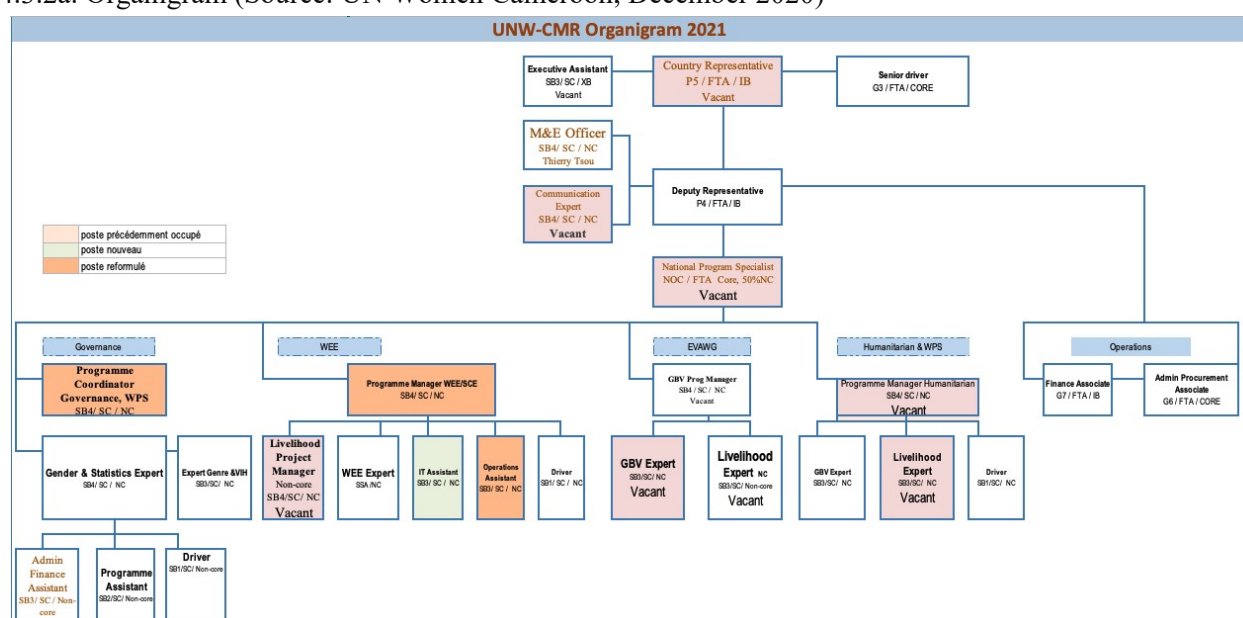
The withdrawal of UN Women personnel from humanitarian areas in 2019 resulted in the abolition and conversion of some posts. This is the case for the following positions:

- Field Activities Coordinator – Women’s Economic Empowerment (renamed Programme Manager Women’s Economic Empowerment/Second Chance Education);
- Women Peace and Security Specialist (currently merged with Governance);
- Community Mobilization Officer (discontinued);
- Administrative and Finance Assistant – Women’s Economic Empowerment (converted to Operations Assistant under Women’s Economic Empowerment/Second Chance Education);
- HIV/Gender and Menstrual Hygiene Officer (discontinued);
- Gender and Humanitarian Expert (discontinued⁷²);
- Operations Assistant (on secondment from Operations to serve Women’s Economic Empowerment/Second Chance Education).

The posts listed below as vacant were previously occupied, with the exception of two posts in the area of Gender-Based Violence:

- Livelihood Expert - Ending Violence Against Women (originally entitled Women’s Economic Empowerment and Social Cohesion - Humanitarian Expert);
- Programme Manager - Ending Violence Against Women.

Figure 4.3.2a. Organigram (Source: UN Women Cameroon, December 2020)



The following positions were vacant at the time of the evaluation:

- Country Representative;
- National Programme Specialist;
- Communication Expert;

⁷² The position has been discontinued but duties associated with this post have been transferred to the post originally dedicated to *Gender and Governance*, thus making it a “double-hatted” position.

- Programme Manager Humanitarian;
- Programme Manager Economic Empowerment;
- Programme Manager Ending Violence Against Women;
- Programme Expert Ending Violence Against Women;
- Livelihood Expert Ending Violence Against Women;
- Livelihood Expert Humanitarian;
- Humanitarian Expert Ending Violence Against Women;
- Executive Assistant.

The Humanitarian Action, Peace and Security post has been removed. This role was merged with the portfolio of the personnel in charge of Gender, Governance and Women's Political Participation.

Vacancies are often filled by remaining personnel. Since 2019, the Deputy Representative has been combining her own responsibilities with those of the Country Representative. The post of Operations Manager is not even mentioned as vacant in the organigram. This places in the long run the accumulation of functions in the position of Finance Associate. There are only two posts under the heading of Operations, which is not enough to cover Country Office requirements in operations. This could explain project disbursement delays, as regretted by some of the partners consulted.

The evaluation team has already expressed concern about the lack of personnel dedicated to the impact areas of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence and the implicit inclusion of the Women's Leadership and Political Participation area under the collective heading Governance. Thus, the position Programme Coordinator, Governance Women, Peace and Security covers a long list of responsibilities. The Programme Coordinator concomitantly manages interventions related to Women's Leadership and Political Participation; Norms; Coordination; Women, Peace and Security and, to a lesser extent, HIV and Gender Statistics because each of these last two areas has an expert.

Similarly, activities related to Women's Economic Empowerment are managed in conjunction with those of the Second Chance Education programme, with the assistance of an expert in Women's Economic Empowerment. Human resources and procurement issues are handled by the Procurement Officer.

The overall design of the Internal Control Framework (ICF), is fully in line with the policy of separation of duties (see Figure 4.3.2a). The current size of the workforce is such that the Country Office has to rely on the support of the Regional Office for the "alternate" Verifying Officer and Senior Manager to ensure compliance with control procedures governing finance, procurement and human resource decisions. In the event of the prolonged absence of personnel, delays can be expected in the processing of partner advances, payment of fees, purchases and services, etc. Looking for instance at the duties of "Buyer" performed by the Administration Associate, the post also includes human resources and procurement. It could happen that the employee is absent from the office for varying periods of time due to illness or for a more happy reason, such as maternity leave. The ICF does not provide for alternate personnel to perform these duties.

Figure 4.3.2b. Internal control framework


ICF Matrix Cameroon CO																	
Functional Title	Name	Contract Type	Project Name and Number	Core Atlas ICF Roles				Supplementary Atlas ICF Roles					Non-Atlas ICF Roles				
				Project Manager (1st Authority)	Coordinating Officer* (2nd Authority and must be staff)	Verifying Officer (3rd Authority and must be staff)	Finance User	Buyer	Oversee Match Exceptions	Send to KK	Vendor Approver (Must be done at Regional Office)	Asset Fiscal Point	Asset Processor	Asset Fiscal Approver	Program the Officer / Manager	Petty Cash Custodian	Asset Manager
Management Unit																	
Representative a.s.	JALAL HIND	PTA	ALL		Senior Manager (1)				X	X					X		X
WFO		PTA	ALL		Manager Level 1					Alternate					Alternate		Alternate
HR and Communication																	
HR																	X
Communication																	X
Leadership and Political Participation																	
Leadership & Political Participation Project Manager	Valere MENOU	SC		X													
Gender Specialist & SCOs Expert	Yves MAFIO	SC		X													
Programme Manager	Bouchard ZAMBO	SC															X
Programme Assistant	Nelly KAMEDEM	SC													X	X	
Other	Yvonne ZAMBELETTE	SC															X
Economic Empowerment																	
				X													
EVANS																	
Project Expert	Solomon MPOUMOUN	SC		X													
Peace & Security - Humanitarian Actions																	
Gender and Humanitarian Expert	Nicolas EVANSO	SC															X
Other	George ASSOUMOUNG	SC															X
Frontier Issues																	
Programme Manager	Enzo KINOU	SC		X													
Operations Unit																	
Finance Associate	Yves FOLGA	PTA				X (1)	X					Alternate		X			
Admin Associate	André DAVAME	PTA					X						X	Alternate			
Operations Assistant	François MENDO	UNV															X
Senior Other	Shane KON FOUUM	PTA															X
Other	Nicolas TENRE	SC															X

(1) Alternate Senior Manager, Alternate Verifying Officer will be at the Regional Office.

Important Instructions:

- This delegation of Authority letter is prepared based on the Internal Control Framework Document (ICF) and, in no way, is or should be meant constituting a SC, but rather complementing the document to apply at the Country Office level.
- Each person may exercise only one of the authorities on any one transaction.
- In absence of a project manager in an issue, or to be replaced, the deputy project manager (if the project has one) or Alternate Project Manager who is temporarily assigned should function as the first Authority for the project in issue as per the Internal Control Framework (ICF) authorities and responsibilities. The Alternate Project Manager can be designated after discussion with the first Authority in respect to the delegation.
- Where staff have both the Project Manager and Coordinating Officer profiles, the staff must not accept a requisition and an associated expenditure and must not act as the second Authority for transactions charged to staff's own project.

Approved by:



Name : JALAL HIND

Functional Title: Deputy Representative, OK

Office Title: Cameroon Country Office

09/06/2020

(1) Alternate Senior Manager; Alternate Verifying Officer will be at the Regional Office.

Important Instructions:

- This delegation of Authority table is prepared based on UN Women's Internal Control Framework Document (ICF) and, in no way, is or should be interpreted as a substitute for the ICF, but rather complementing the document to make it applicable at the Country Office level.
- Each person may exercise only one of the authorities on any one transaction.
- In absence of a project manager i.e. on leave, not to be onboard, the Deputy project manager (if the project has one) or Alternate Project Manager who temporarily replaces should function as the first authority for the project in Atlas, as per the Internal Control Framework (ICF) authorities and responsibilities. The Alternate Project Manager can be assigned in Atlas if the project is not in the Atlas.
- When staff have both the Project Manager and Coordinating Officer profiles, the staff must not approve a requisition and an associated purchase order and must not act as the second authority for transactions charged to staff's own project.

Approved by:

Signature: 
 Name: JALAL HIND
 Date: 08/06/2020
 Functional Title: Deputy Representative, CO
 Office Title: Cameroon Country Office

Source: UN Women Cameroon, December 2020

Retrieving project documents was the most difficult part of the evaluation. Of the 33 Atlas projects, 22 projects had documentation of varying size (from 2 to 71 documents) relating to activity reports, mission reports, collaboration agreements, etc. However, 11 office projects listed in Atlas had no documentation.⁷³ The evaluation team was informed that these losses of institutional memory were subsequent to the departure of personnel. Procedures for handing over and retrieving documents are not very clear. Many of the documents sought during the initial design phase of this evaluation are stored on staff computers. As a result, the transfer of knowledge to new members of personnel is not guaranteed.

Field visits are the first to be sacrificed when programme personnel are faced with heavy workloads. This affects the quality of reports because of gaps in result monitoring. It also implies that some of the objectives set out in the Strategic Note will not be achieved, and that other objectives will only be achieved at the cost of potentially overworked human resources as a result of the accumulation of responsibilities.

Nevertheless, some are optimistic about available human resources in 2021, based on expected funds from donors. A transfer of US\$700,000 is expected from the Japanese Government in late 2021. In addition, a US\$1.3 million agreement earmarked for peace and security activities in the Far North Region has also been signed with Japan. This is likely to boost programming during the 2021–2022 financial year. These US\$2 million dollars combined with US\$900,000 from the Peace Building Fund would make it possible to meet staffing needs and re-establish the presence of UN Women Cameroon in the humanitarian area.

4.3.3. Security of data and equipment

Finding 11.

There is a risk in terms of digital security and the reliability of information technology (IT) equipment. The recent recruitment of an Information Technology Assistant is a positive step but does not in itself guarantee improvement of the unsatisfactory score attributed to UN Women Cameroon by IT and Communications Services. Placing the Information Technology Assistant under a programmatic unit, rather than Operations, limits the scope of the position's added value. Furthermore, the Country Office does not have enough radio equipment to deal with crisis situations.

An Information Technology Assistant role was created in 2020, which should improve the concerning trend of information security indicators. The degree of adherence to security standards is one of the lowest in the organization.

The participation rate of UN Women Cameroon in IT security awareness training was only 65 per cent in 2020, which

⁷³ Atlas projects 113416, 112785, 115891, 98311, 98308, 104952a, 104952b, 104948, 113646, 113645, 80785.

is 15 per cent below the minimum requirement. The security of its electronic devices is rather low (3 per cent to 7 per cent), according to the UN Women Information Technology Services report. Some personnel deplored the absence and/or obsolescence of radio communication equipment required to deal with conflict situations.

InfoSec Compliance 2020		Device Security		
Office	Overall	Office	Managed	Protected
Cameroon	✗	Cameroon	3%	7%
Central Africa Republic-CAR	✗	Central Africa Republic-CAR	0%	0%
Congo DRC	✗	Congo DRC	0%	0%
Cote D'Ivoire	✓	Cote D'Ivoire	100%	96%
Liberia	✓	Liberia	100%	100%
Mali	⚠	Mali	36%	42%
Niger	✗	Niger	0%	0%
Nigeria	✓	Nigeria	97%	100%
Senegal	✓	Senegal	95%	98%
Sierra Leone	✗	Sierra Leone	0%	3%

Figure 4.3.3. IT compliance and reliability scores [Source: *Global Information Security and Compliance Report - December 2020*]

The evaluation team could have nursed hopes for an improved situation if the Information Technology Assistant position was assigned to the entire Country Office. However, according to the Country Office's organigram, the position is placed under the Women's Economic Empowerment impact area, whose non-core funds are essentially those of three projects⁷⁴ that have experienced disbursement difficulties on the part of the Cameroonian Government. This, in addition to the Service Contract nature of the post, does not provide a long-term perspective for a function so critical to the security of the Country Office's digital data and the reliability of its IT equipment.

4.4. SUSTAINABILITY

Finding 12.

In general, while the learning gained by gender actors through capacity-building programmes is often sustained over time, this is not the case with UN Women activities in the North-West and South-West regions. Short duration or interruption of these projects does not guarantee national ownership.

Furthermore, the sustainability of UN Women support to the national action plan on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security is compromised by the lack of governmental commitment to coordinate its implementation and monitoring.

However, the Second Chance Education and Women Count programmes have shown tangible signs of sustainability.

4.4.1 Sustainability of activities that target civil society

⁷⁴ The impact area of Women's Economic Empowerment has three projects funded directly by the Government of Cameroon, all of which have witnessed suspension of disbursements for several months. The projects include the NTUI-BAMENDA Gender-Road Project, which was financed by the Central African States Development Bank through the Ministry of Public Works; the Gender-Road RING ROAD project, which was funded by the African Development Bank through the Ministry of Public Works; and the Agricultural Value Chains project, which was funded by the African Development Bank through the Ministry of Agriculture. Disbursements for the first two projects were suspended for more than two years.

The short duration of projects implemented by UN Women Cameroon did not always lead to tangible results. This was the case with the project Improving the Protection of Women and Girls Affected by the Conflict in the South West and North-West Regions of Cameroon implemented by Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy. The project lasted only three months (August-December 2019). The implementing partner⁷⁵ acknowledged challenges encountered with the short duration of this project, especially activities under Output 3, which aimed to support survivors of violence. Project beneficiaries were concerned that their small-business activities would collapse after such a short period of exposure to training activities. Although 75 per cent⁷⁶ of the women supported by the programme gave positive testimonies as to the performance of their businesses and their ability to break even, they were unsure about the sustainability of results. UN Women's limited presence (or even absence) in the field and the modest operational capacities of implementing partners implied insufficient monitoring and follow-up. This had an impact on the conduct of activities and the sustainability of any results.

In contexts with internally displaced persons and refugees, humanitarian aid and sustainability are generally difficult to combine due to the nature of the crises. However, these are not mutually exclusive: transferring the project Cohesion Spaces for Women and Girls to the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family has ensured sustainability. Several sources indicated that there was sufficient ownership of the infrastructure by beneficiary communities in the East and Far North regions.

In refugee camps, UN Women involved traditional and religious chiefs/leaders, local elites and beneficiary groups to facilitate the implementation of its activities. Nevertheless, the gap left by the withdrawal of the organization from the Far North Region was not filled by civil society or the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family. UNFPA quickly took over after UN Women withdrew and coordinated United Nations programming on ending violence against women.

4.4.2 Sustainability of activities targeting the Government

The evaluation noted the Cameroon Government's commitment and adoption of some of the interventions promoted by UN Women, notably HeforShe and Women Count.

The Government's political commitment did materialize through the official launch of the HeforShe campaign by Prime Minister Philemon Yang and through the championing activities of Professor Jean Emmanuel Pondi, former Secretary General of the University of Yaoundé.

The Government of Cameroon has put in place an environment conducive to the inclusion of gender in statistics by institutionalizing a coordination mechanism, the Interministerial Committee on Gender Statistics in Cameroon chaired by the Director General of the National Institute of Statistics and the Secretary General of the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family. A steering committee⁷⁷ involving senior government officials was set up in July 2020. In addition, the Government has allocated about 360 685,30 for the continuity of the gender statistics programme in 2021 beyond UN Women's support.

UN Women Cameroon has a good reputation⁷⁸ for building capacity in gender equality mechanisms at the national level. Gender actors at the governmental level (officials from central and decentralized services of the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Defence) and civil society (including academics, journalists and students) have benefitted from diverse training organized by the Country Office. This training will contribute positively to national gender expertise.

⁷⁵ Centre for Human Rights and Peace Advocacy.

⁷⁶ UN Women, 2019, Final Activity Report on Improving the Protection of Women and Girls Affected by the Conflict in the South-West and North-West regions of Cameroon.

⁷⁷ UN Women Newsletter Q3, July to September 2020.

⁷⁸ Individual interviews Gender Thematic Group and United Nations system agencies.

However, stakeholders regretted not having been invited to the midterm review sessions of the Strategic Note. Their participation would have enforced ownership of proceedings from these consultations about what needs to be improved regarding UN Women's work.

The sustainability of results depends on several factors and often goes far beyond the limits of strictly internal UN Women issues. This probably explains why gender budgeting activities did not continue in 2020.⁷⁹ Two years earlier, UN Women Cameroon had hired a consultant to develop a strategic plan for gender budgeting. Although the proposed plan was not validated, action on it was not long in coming. Thus, in March 2019, a training seminar targeted senior officials from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family for the adoption of gender budgeting to strengthen government accountability on gender.

In addition, UN Women has contributed in various ways to the objectives of resolution 1325 in Cameroon:

- recruitment of two female consultants and the provision of equipment for the establishment of the 1325 Secretariat at the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family,
- the direct implementation of activities supervised by UN Women personnel, and financial support for the implementation of activities of the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family.

These efforts will not be sustainable as long as the structures expected for the operationalization of the National Action Plan for Resolution 1325 (2018–2020) are not in place. For example, the Steering and Orientation Committee as well as the regional, divisional and district cells are yet to exist. Furthermore, the technical coordination, where resolution 1325 focal points from different administrative units should converge, did not materialize. Apart from UN Women contributions to the Ministry of the Promotion of Women and the Family, no funding has been received from the Government of Cameroon for the implementation of the national action plan.

These gaps, delays and shortcomings affect national adoption of UN Women's efforts to implement Cameroon's commitment to United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

4.5. HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Finding 13.

The wording of the Strategic Note takes into account human rights and gender equality and targets refugees, victims of sexual violence, internally displaced persons and communities hosting refugees and displaced persons. However, rural women survivors of violence remain left out of services and facilities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

While minority groups have been targeted by HIV or COVID-19 awareness programmes, there are no reports of UN Women actions that promote the welfare or empowerment of people living with disabilities.

The focus of UN Women Cameroon on human rights and gender equality norms and standards is reflected in the portfolio design, where the principles of participation/empowerment, inclusion/non-discrimination and national responsibility/transparency figure prominently. The evaluation noted that the Country Office has contributed to the promotion of human rights, gender equality and equity for marginalized groups in its interventions. Despite UN Women's very low budget allocation for political participation (4 per cent)⁸⁰, there has been an increase in the number of women, including indigenous and disabled women, in municipal councils and the National Assembly.

However, there was no reference in any of the Country Office's implementation reports to any contribution to promoting the rights of people living with disabilities and minority groups over the period under evaluation. For example, support for people with disabilities is not visible in the area of Women's Leadership and Political Participation. Similarly, the evaluation is not aware of any cases of integration of marginalized groups in Women's Economic Empowerment programmes. The Second Chance Education programme does not indicate any breakdown by ethnic group per se, for example, figures for Mbororos or refugees. However, through its collaboration with the

⁷⁹ The minimal investment of 2020 Country Office resources in gender-responsive budgeting correlates with the limited progress since 2017 in building relationships with the Ministry of Finance. See discussion in point (2) under Lessons Learned.

⁸⁰ See Figure 5.11.

Youth and Student Forum (CAMYOSFOP), UN Women has conducted several awareness-raising workshops on HIV in 2019 and on COVID-19 in 2020 in the East, Littoral and West regions of Cameroon targeting community leaders from the Mbororo and Pygmy ethnic groups.

Women's economic empowerment activities have been small scale. This will not change the power dynamics between different groups within the communities. In terms of gender-based violence, most structures are not very accessible to women living in rural areas. One has to walk long distances to find police stations, many of which may not have a gender desk. To find shelters for women in distress or women's empowerment and family centres, one needs to be in an urban municipality. The centres require access to telecommunications networks. In this respect, refugee women who live in camps with facilities and services offered by cohesion spaces are less isolated than women in rural areas.

Lastly, while the work carried out by the Women Count programme was generally commended, it was also criticized for "not inquiring on the situation of marginalized populations".

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation has enabled the evaluation team to describe the achievements of the UN Women Cameroon Country Office from 2018 to 2020, especially under the chapter dedicated to efficiency. The Country Office's work, alongside the Government of Cameroon, for human rights and development that is responsive to gender equality was recognized by all categories of respondents during data collection. However, some problems were during the Strategic Note period were also observed.

At the end of 2017, as UN Women Cameroon was designing its Strategic Note, the Country Office had just submitted a US\$1 million proposal to the Government of Japan for a programme related to the needs of women living in crisis-affected regions of Cameroon.

The project was conceptually compelling, mainly because it was modelled on the same logic as the successful Peace and Security project implemented in the Arab States in 2012. Through this project, UN Women contributed to bringing lasting relief to Syrian women refugees in Jordan. Unfortunately, in 2018, UN Women Cameroon did not receive the long-awaited funds. The Country Office suffered a further setback during the same year as the Cameroon Government's failure to disburse funds⁸¹ for the Gender-Road Project persisted since 2016. This funding was part of a multi-donor funding package, which included the African Development Bank.

These funding problems are at the root of constraints observed throughout this evaluation report, including reported changes in the size and composition of the office workforce. In terms of relevance, the Country Office is cautious about engaging in new areas of work, otherwise consistent with Cameroon international commitments. Similarly, field missions and baseline studies are estimated as too costly and therefore postponed or cancelled, which ends up affecting the quality of annual reports to donors. The latter's decisions about allocating grants are partly reliant on results-based success stories. The drying up of funding has led to restrictive measures that lead to an unfortunate vicious circle.

As a result of the shortfall in non-core funds, the Country Office has been forced, since 2019, to withdraw its personnel from crisis zones (Far North, North-West, South-West regions). Conversely, in 2020, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) did not allocate funds that were otherwise annually transferred to UN Women. This is because UN Women had discontinued its presence in the crisis zones. The Country Office's withdrawal to the capital city implied the sudden closure of unfinished projects. This was the case in areas where UN Women's presence could not be replaced by another United Nations agency, as UNFPA did in Maroua for projects related to ending gender-based violence.

⁸¹ The previous evaluation of the Cameroon Strategic Note had recommended that UN Women Cameroon "ensures close follow-up with the Government to unlock the second instalment of the Gender-Road and Ring-Road projects."

As this evaluation report was finalized, a multi-million dollar package was being formalized with the Government of Japan to fund a proposed Leadership, Empowerment, Access to Protection programme in the Far North. This will be further enhanced by the release of US\$1.5 million from the Government of Cameroon to fund economic empowerment projects mainly in rural areas. A virtuous cycle will then be possible in 2021.

However, the normative role of UN Women is likely to be limited by its perceived distancing from the small civil society organizations that play a key role in the women's movement and by the budgetary predominance of economic initiatives relative to areas dedicated to the elimination of violence against women and women's political participation. The evaluation team has made the following observations:

CONCLUSION 1

The normative role of UN Women Cameroon is well established in Cameroon. This reputation risks being undermined by the perception that the Country Office has distanced itself from small civil society organizations. Concerns that were previously expressed by the Review Committees⁸² of international treaties, including CEDAW, could have been better represented in the Strategic Note, had the Country Office maintained a vibrant relationship with civil society. UN Women Cameroon's proximity with civil society organizations existed before, when the number of PCAs with non-State organizations was yet to know a drastic decrease.

Renewed collaboration with civil society will not necessarily guarantee the end of budgetary imbalances by impact area. The budgetary dominance in the area of Women's Economic Empowerment may not change suddenly, but with more interactions between UN Women and many smaller organizations,⁸³ relevant decisions may be taken to draw funding from a "privileged" impact area and cater for the needs in sub-funded areas, such as Ending Violence Against Women.

This would also have led to greater integration of programmes aimed at eradicating female genital mutilation and gender-based violence within the Women's Economic Empowerment area and, arguably, a greater inclusion of marginalized and/or disabled people in economic empowerment and political participation programmes.

CONCLUSION 2

It is undeniable that UN Women Cameroon has achieved tangible results in the five impact areas, despite difficulties encountered. That said, fund disbursement issues have significantly reduced the performance of Women's Economic Empowerment projects. Corresponding output indicators did not reflect the prolonged interruption of activities in this area, which affects the credibility of the information displayed in the RMS. Conversely, the higher completion rates observed in the impact area of Leadership and Political Participation are rather attributable to their classification under a package called "Governance", whose components are gender statistics, gender budgeting, and advocacy for the inclusion of HIV and menstrual hygiene in plans, policies and budgets at local and national levels.

CONCLUSION 3

The financial hardship experienced by UN Women Cameroon following the loss of Japanese funds and disbursement shortfalls has led to decisions regarding the number of its personnel and its geographical presence outside Yaoundé. Personnel departures without clear handover procedures (see section 4.3.2) have resulted in the loss of institutional memory. There is limited documentation in terms of inventory, filing and storage on a virtual folder accessible to staff.

The lack of expected funds has prolonged the staffing deficit in the Operations Unit. This continues to put the Country Office management structure at risk and affects its organizational efficiency. The small size of human resources leads to delays in approving and executing transactions related to procurement, recruitment, advances to partners, etc. The

⁸² Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (2014) and Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2019).

⁸³ A gender expert stated that to date "there is no mapping, not even an approximate mapping, of civil society organizations working on gender issues."

practice of paying “all the money at once” to partners becomes preferable in this context, as it minimizes the number of transactions. However, this practice of one-time transaction is objectionable as it exposes the organization to risk, as noted above.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

In a workshop with UN Women personnel and members of the Reference Group, the evaluation team discussed the proposed recommendations and agreed to rephrase some of those that may be misunderstood.

RELEVANCE

The evaluation recommends that UN Women Cameroon:

1) Reconsider its partnership approach in order to develop new collaborative dynamics with civil society to strengthen their capacities for collective action to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment. A first step would be to

- a. develop a mapping, even if approximate, of civil society organizations actively involved in the women’s movement without omitting disabled people’s organizations and youth organizations for intergenerational continuity;
- b. establish relationships with partner non-governmental organizations beyond the confines of project implementation agreements;
- c. deliberately include strategic alliances with feminist and diverse civil society organizations in its partnership plan;
- d. revitalize the CSAG by increasing the frequency of its meetings to three or four times a year and expanding it to include smaller organizations.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★□	★★★★★	★★★□□

2) Reinforce the normative dimension of its action by:

- a. Seizing opportunities offered by the development of a new National Action Plan on Resolution 1325 (2021–2025) and the review of the National Gender Policy (2011–2020) to reflect concerns previously expressed by the Review Committees of international treaties, including CEDAW. It is important to involve civil society organizations in this policy update by putting these concerns on the agenda of the Civil Society Organizations Gender Working Group and emphasizing consultation with marginalized social groups and people with disabilities.
- b. Reviewing Output CMR_D-3.1.4⁸⁴ or formulating a new output that encourages judicial and legislative bodies to take action to rapidly reduce early marriage, genital mutilation and other practices that are harmful to women’s physical and mental integrity.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★★	★★★★□	★□□□□

3) Increasing the budgetary share of impact areas related to Women’s Leadership and Political Participation and Ending Gender-Based Violence.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★★	★★★★□	★□□□□

⁸⁴ Output CMR_D-3.1.4 “Religious, traditional and opinion leaders are provided with relevant information on harmful cultural practices impacting reproductive and maternal health”.

4) Supporting the participation of women's organizations in the Consortium of Civil Society Organizations⁸⁵ to advance dialogue with the Ministry of Finance on gender-responsive budgeting?

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★□□□	★★★★★	★★□□□

EFFECTIVENESS

The evaluation recommends that UN Women Cameroon:

5) Integrate into the new Strategic Note measures necessary to scale up economic empowerment initiatives that have demonstrated potential. By targeting institutional levels (where policies, laws and strategies are developed) to deploy its economic support, UN Women Cameroon can reach more women than through isolated economic initiatives.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★□□□	★★★★□	★★★★□

6) Reconfigure the classification of intervention themes across impact areas, so as to clearly separate headings devoted to governance in general and specifically to women's political participation from those devoted to gender statistics, HIV and menstrual hygiene mainstreaming, and gender-responsive planning and budgeting. The latter should be given its rightful place in the next strategic planning. In addition, the Second Chance Education programme should be moved from the category of Frontline Issues to the area of Women's Economic Empowerment.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★★	★★★□□	★□□□□

7) Strengthen its monitoring and reporting system by specifying indicator baselines, including monitoring missions in the workplans of each programme manager, and uploading reported data in a functional and local system complementary to the RMS.

Many respondents, including those from sister agencies, would like to see UN Women exercise more caution regarding the volume of instalments advanced to partners. Instead of entrusting all project funds to a partner, even a government partner, why not make disbursements by deliverables systematically conditional on progress on the outputs achieved? Subsequent instalments would only be paid upon assessment of progress.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★★	★★★□□	★★★□□

8) Recover, organize and preserve its institutional memory by appointing a focal point responsible for rigorous knowledge management. This focal point would coordinate procedures of inventorying, filing and making all non-confidential documents available on a OneDrive folder. The Human Resources Officer should ensure that handover and retrieval procedures are clearly articulated, understood by personnel and put into practice without delay.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
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⁸⁵ A collective of civil society organizations with government representation (Ministry of Finance) for public finance transparency made up of COSADER, Afroleadership, CRADIF, I-WATCH, Budget Transparency PLATFORM, RESYPAT, NOLFOWO, Dynamique Citoyenne, CRADEC, PLANOSCAM, SC ; les Jeudis de Cotonou, Cabinet MTD, APAC, ROSFIP, ANCFM, UAOD, APESEC, RESIPAT, APINK, RESDECO, CERAGN, AGAD, FCJ, PPTE, SUN, CAPE, SEPDOBAD and CIDE.

★★★★★ | ★★★★★ | ★★★□□

9) Develop a strategy to contribute to gender coordination at the United Nations system level.

a. The coordination role of UN Women could be strengthened, as suggested by a donor country Cooperation Officer, by pursuing joint resource-mobilization strategies to limit the perception of inter-agency competition, particularly in the area of Ending Violence Against Women, where UNFPA also operates. UN Women's comparative advantage in this area can be reaffirmed in the field of psychosocial assistance in humanitarian contexts, the drafting of guides and policy papers, and the production of statistical data on the prevalence of early marriage, genital mutilation and violence against women.

b. UN Women should extend this coordinating role to civil society by becoming more involved with the women's movement, not just ministries. As noted by one of UN Women Cameroon's partners: "UN Women needs to adequately follow up its collaboration with civil society organizations." The revitalization of Gender Cafés would establish a channel of communication between the Government and organized women's groups.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★□□□	★★★★□□	★★★★□□

EFFICIENCY

The evaluation recommends that UN Women Cameroon:

10) Continue resource-mobilization efforts to fill staffing gaps, avoid the practice of "double-hatting" several functions⁸⁶ in one post and recruit an Operations Manager and a Country Representative without delay⁸⁷. The context is favourable for mobilizing resources from the European Union, whose programme cycle starts in 2021.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★□

11) Approach its workplan in a realistic manner by ceasing to rely on expected instalments from donors that have defaulted disbursements for several years and whose last payment dates as far back as 2016. From its resource-mobilization plan, the Country Office intends to redouble its efforts to closely monitor the release of the second instalment for the Gender-Road and Ring-Road projects.⁸⁸ The evaluation suggests that, after several years of waiting, the organization should be more circumspect about the availability of these funds.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★□

12) Cautiously take into account future funding from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), whose disbursements will be entrusted to the Ministry of Agriculture, while anticipating similar difficulties as those encountered with the Agricultural Value Chains, Ntui-Bamenda Gender-Road and Ring-Road projects.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★□□	★★□□□	★□□□□

⁸⁶ For example, (i) the position of Governance Officer and Women, Peace and Security Officer concentrates on responsibilities for Women's Leadership and Political Participation; Gender-Responsive Budgeting; Women, Peace and Security; as well as coordination of the Gender Thematic Group; (ii) the Finance Associate assumes the functions of the Operations Officer.

⁸⁷ The evaluation team will communicate this recommendation directly to the Regional Office.

⁸⁸ To quote a recommendation from the 2017 CPE report "UN Women Cameroon should ensure close follow-up with the Government to unlock the second instalment of the Gender-Road and Ring-Road projects."

13) Organize a function analysis exercise to determine the optimal size of the Country Office and revise the organigram to place the new post of Information Technology Assistant under the Operations Unit.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★★	★★★★★	★□□□□

14) Renew radio communication equipment to cope with crisis situations and adopt adequate measures to improve the office's low score on digital security, the reliability of IT equipment and participation in cybersecurity-awareness sessions.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★★	★★★★★	★□□□□

SUSTAINABILITY

The evaluation recommends that UN Women Cameroon:

15) Adopt a long-term approach in its relationship with civil society organizations. This means going beyond the strictly operational limits of Collaboration Agreements, as partners are valued and considered to represent more than service providers. There needs to be a consistent commitment in order to facilitate the transfer of skills and extend the reach of UN Women. In areas far from the capital, sustainability can be further assured by investing efforts in community mechanisms, e.g. mayors, village chiefs, social grass-roots organizations, market management committees.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★□□	★★★★★	★★★★□

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

The evaluation recommends that UN Women Cameroon:

16) Involve women doubly affected by gender exclusion and discrimination based on ethnicity, disability, income, language, culture and lifestyle in the design, monitoring and implementation of its programmes. It is important that the next midterm review take place in the presence of stakeholders, including members of small civil society organizations that are not represented by the current members of the CSAG or the large non-governmental organizations that have signed implementation contracts with the Country Office.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★□□	★★★★★	★★★□□

17) Ensure that the Women Count programme dedicates part of its research to marginalized populations by involving their organizations in raising awareness on the use of gender statistics.

Priority	Impact	Complexity
★★★★□	★★★★□	★★★★□

6. LESSONS LEARNED

Leçon 1.

Both the 2017 Country Portfolio Evaluation and this one observe that UN Women Cameroon is aligned with national and international strategies, policies and legislation. According to a government official, the influence of UN Women in Cameroon is such that “the National Gender Policy bears the marks of UN Women’s influence in Cameroon.” Both evaluations, however, deplore the weak engagement⁸⁹ of successive Strategic Notes in the area of Women’s Political Leadership and addressing practices that are harmful to women’s physical and mental integrity, such as genital mutilation.

The evaluation of the previous Strategic Note noted that UN Women Cameroon’s interest in women’s political leadership has waned since 2016, when the Country Office shifted its support⁹⁰ from women’s political participation to the humanitarian context. The support to women’s participation in conflict and humanitarian settings is no longer maintained since the withdrawal of UN Women Cameroon from crisis zones.

In 2020, however, the Country Office worked with Elections Cameroon to advocate for quotas in elections, thus leading to a significant increase in women’s representation in Cameroon’s Parliament, Senate and Councils. These results would have been greater if budgetary allocations for political participation had not been so low.⁹¹

Low allocations observed today between 2018 and 2020 to the areas of Ending Violence Against Women and Women’s Leadership and Political Participation are consistent with the lower interest in these thematic areas, as deplored by the previous Country Portfolio Evaluation in 2017. Changing perceptions about the relative importance of these thematic areas will require deliberate efforts to reverse a trend that has already become entrenched over two Strategic Note cycles.

Leçon 2.

A central theme of this evaluation is that UN Women Cameroon’s mandate cannot advance significantly without collaboration with civil society organizations. A review of the two successive Strategic Notes, representing the period from 2014 to 2020, shows that UN Women Cameroon has restricted its interaction with civil society organizations to project implementation dimension only. The previous evaluation, however, had recommended⁹² that more strategic links be forged with women’s networks and civil society organizations involved in gender issues in order to establish synergies.

For example, in gender budgeting, the value of relationships with civil society is clear. It is recalled⁹³ that in November 2020, a group of non-governmental organizations coalesced to demand from the Ministry of Finance that “civil society participates in the implementation of public finance reform.” These organizations could have been interested in collaborating with UN Women, particularly through the validation of the Strategic Plan on Gender-Responsive Budgeting commissioned by UN Women Cameroon in 2018. Given that the group of civil society organizations is in dialogue with the Ministry of Finance, it is a fortunate opportunity if we bear in mind the evaluative remark, made in 2017, that UN Women had failed⁹⁴ to establish links with the Ministry of Finance.

Leçon 3.

⁸⁹ In 2017, the Country Portfolio Evaluation concluded: “UN Women’s involvement in general was relevant to international and national strategies, policies and legislations as well as to the needs of women. Involvement in violence against women could have been stronger regarding female genital mutilation and early marriage and leadership of women in politics lacks continuous support.” [Country Portfolio Evaluation (2014–2016), p. 48.]

⁹⁰ the previous Country Portfolio Evaluation concluded: “UN Women addressed the vulnerability of women in their lack of political leadership in 2014 and 2015, but in 2016 the focus shifted to supporting women’s leadership in the humanitarian context. This is unfortunate, since the gaps in political leadership continue to exist.” [Country Portfolio Evaluation (2014–2016), p. 44.]

⁹¹ See Figure 4.3.1.

⁹² “In view of the partnership with non-governmental organizations, this mainly focused on implementing partners. Establishing more strategic linkages with women networks and CSOs working on GEWE could have been beneficial for UN Women as well as for the CSOs.” [Country Portfolio Evaluation (2014–2016), p. 44.]

⁹³ See section 4.3.1 above, Choice of Partners.

⁹⁴ With the Ministry of Finance, although there was promising engagement at the beginning of the period of evaluation, there is little progress currently.

The success of the Gender Statistics programme is not a miracle. It is part of a continuum of consultations between UN Women and the National Institute of Statistics dating back to 2013, when there was fruitful collaboration on the Fourth Survey on Living Conditions of Households and the module on time use.

The success of the programme also stems from regular dialogue with a broad spectrum of civil society organizations, government institutions and media professionals as part of a framework regulated by the organizational set-up of the gender statistics sector: there is a National Statistics Council, an Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Production of Gender Statistics and a Technical Secretariat within the Government.

The timing is right, as Cameroon is in the process of designing its National Strategy for Statistical Development 2020–2029. Statistics authorities noted⁹⁵ the absence of gender mainstreaming in a similar document covering the period 2015–2019.

Leçon 4.

The construction of the Batchenga-Lena Road (via Ntui-Yoko) raised a lot of hopes. The road project features in Atlas as “98305-CMR-Women smallholders”, “98307-CMR-Opportunities for women”. Its benefits for the families of women living along the road were described in a promising UN Women article: “The Journey Along the Gender Road in Cameroon”.

The general concept of this infrastructure project was to provide accompanying measures on cross-cutting issues such as gender and the environment during the construction of roads. Part of the work was devoted to raising awareness on HIV/AIDS among the local population, improving their living conditions with a focus on gender through income-generating activities for rural women and facilitating their access to markets and services available in major centres.

An agreement was reached in 2016 with the donors to create a so-called “soft” component that would exist in parallel with the so-called “hard” infrastructure component. This was considered as a gender dimension of the major road project to be financed by the ADB and BDEAC, through the Ministry of Public Works. A first disbursement took place in 2016 for the Atlas projects mentioned above, which allowed UN Women activities to start, but the complexity of the financial set-up is such that no other disbursement has been made since then. According to the evaluation respondents, “The roads project abandoned us.”

The hard component of the project proceeded according to plan: the 200 km of asphalt were built with financing by the French Development Agency and the Japan International Cooperation Agency, as well as ADB and BDEAC. The positive effects of the road construction are now being felt in terms of opening up the area.

It should be noted that the gender component was part of a set of “parallel activities” of the project that were conceptually linked to the road construction phase, as measures to mitigate the environmental impact and reduce the harm caused to neighbouring communities by road construction crews and truck drivers, including adverse effects on gender relations (prostitution, HIV, human trafficking, etc.). It is therefore difficult to envisage the continuation of projects “98305-CMR-Women smallholders” and “98307-CMR-Opportunities for women” because the road construction has been completed.

This experience casts doubts on grants accorded to UN Women through a loan to the Government. The success of a similar project in 2009, on the Garoua-Boulai-Nandeke stretch of road, is associated with the simplicity of its financing modality: At the time, the project had benefited from direct support from the European Union in partnership with the United Nations.

This lesson should inspire caution in approaching the future funding of the three projects proposed by UN Women to IFAD, whose funds are supposed to be disbursed through the Ministry of Agriculture.

⁹⁵ The National Institute of Statistics has conducted a Gender Evaluation of the Statistics Development Strategy.

