

IN BRIEF

COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION- STRATEGIC NOTE 2018-2021

UN WOMEN HAITI

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This brief summarizes the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Country Portfolio Evaluation of the UN Women Haiti Office's Strategic Note 2018-2021. This type of evaluation systematically analyzes the normative, operational, and coordination aspects of UN Women's contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment development results at the country level.

Introduction

The Republic of Haiti suffered a multidimensional crisis between 2018 and 2021. Pronounced violence, a lapse of legislative powers, and a leadership vacuum in the judiciary culminated in the assassination of the President of the Republic in July 2021. The precarious political situation was compounded by natural disasters, which induced poor economic performance among other development challenges. Plans for constitutional reform and legislative elections have also been postponed indefinitely while the security situation has deteriorated.

Gender equality and women's empowerment remains a major challenge for the country's inclusive and sustainable development. Girls and women remain the most vulnerable to the alarming rise in violence in the country, and recent recurrent shocks are an impediment to progress in improving their living conditions. Despite a constitutional quota, the rate of women's political participation remains one of the lowest ratios worldwide, with three women in the National Assembly.

In this context, UN Women Haiti implemented the 2018-2021 Strategic Note. In line with its threefold mandate within the United Nations, UN Women's programme in Haiti included four thematic areas:

The portfolio included 15 donor-funded projects, and five direct funding projects from headquarters to support the Country Office's operational activities. The total amount of funding was \$11.4 million between 2018 and 2021.

The main objective of this Country Portfolio Evaluation, conducted between April and November 2021, was to assess the Office's progress towards achieving strategic results during the 2018-2021 period to inform the preparation of the next Strategic Note and ensure accountability. The evaluation is therefore oriented for use by the UN Women Haiti Office and the Regional Office, as well as key partners in the country's development context. The Independent Evaluation Service conducted this formative evaluation using a mixed-methods approach including through literature reviews, quantitative data analysis from secondary and primary sources, and qualitative data collection of over 160 individuals.



1. Inclusive governance and parity



2. Women's economic empowerment



3. Disaster risk management and humanitarian action



4. Ending violence against women and girls

UN WOMEN HAITI KEY RESULTS



UN Women Haiti's program was aligned with the Government's strategic priorities, including in its four thematic areas, and its portfolio corresponded to the urgent needs of women and girls in the country. In a period of constant change and multidimensional crisis, the country team adapted to a large extent to the context by reviewing activities and adopting remote working.



UN Women has played an increasingly important normative role in mainstreaming gender across a range of issues, and stakeholders have recognized its increased effectiveness in mobilizing civil society to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Its support for the First Haitian Women's Forum for Peace in 2020 was recognized in a context of widespread violence.



UN Women has contributed to the complementarity of the work of a number of United Nations partners in the area of gender, ensuring proactive coordination and extensive joint programming, such as its role as the lead of the Spotlight Initiative and its participation in Peacebuilding Fund projects with other agencies.



The UN Women programme has contributed to access to services and legal assistance for women through several links in the interventions with partners, notably by revitalizing the Legal Assistance Office through the partnership with the Office of Citizen Protection.



In terms of its work in the humanitarian and risk management space, two rapid gender analyses of COVID-19 and the earthquake provided timely assessments of the situation of girls and women for partners in the crisis context.



In terms of women's economic empowerment, UN Women has been working to implement a local guarantee fund for women in the department of the South. The organization has also advocated with the Central Bank for a larger guarantee fund for women entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSION 1.

UN Women has demonstrated its added value in promoting the importance of the gender agenda at the country level and is well positioned to build on its comparative advantage.

UN Women's gender expertise and capacity for strong networking were widely recognized. Its expertise was appreciated in addressing the situation of girls and women in humanitarian and disaster risk management, and partners confirmed the high level of importance of UN Women in facilitating dialogue in response to the low level of women's engagement in the political arena. These efforts, along with its normative work, have contributed to a higher profile for gender on the national agenda, which will provide leverage for gender action in the context of the upcoming UN Women and United Nations Country Teams strategic frameworks in Haiti.

CONCLUSION 2.

UN Women's work on coordination of the United Nations system in Haiti has formed a solid foundation for gender mainstreaming among technical and financial partners, and will benefit from a stronger knowledge management and operational approach.

UN Women's portfolio was broadly coherent with United Nations agencies and facilitated United Nations agency work with government and civil society partners to integrate a gender perspective. The United Nations Gender Thematic Group and the Gender Sector Table of technical and financial partners served as important vehicles for bringing together key actors, for which UN Women leadership was recognized on the gender mandate. There is a demand for a stronger organizational presence to coordinate, communicate and advise on implementation. There also remains a lack of clarity on inter-agency roles in the field, which would be strengthened by a measurable operational framework building on the work already completed within the United Nations system.

CONCLUSION 3.

UN Women has demonstrated a comparative advantage in developing partnerships with Haitian civil society. However, despite its proximity to the government, instability limited its programmatic approach and sustainability of initiatives.

UN Women was recognized by partners for its strong capacity to mobilize civil society in Haiti. Its partnerships extended to civil society organizations in more than five departments of the country in various areas of intervention, and most stakeholders recognized the effectiveness in building capacity with these organizations. UN Women benefited from a close relationship with its key government partner that has nevertheless been slow to produce public policy effects in gender. The instability in political leadership has affected the continuity and sustainability of the intervention framework, including the national gender policy. The implementation of the sectoral table, gender-sensitive budgeting and norms, as well as implementation of the national gender policy are all areas that should benefit from the strengthening of an operational framework with the government.

CONCLUSION 4.

The difficult context had a negative impact on UN Women's programmatic effectiveness, which was compounded by institutional factors, the lack of a clear strategic vision, and the fragmentation of interventions.

In the face of the multidimensional crisis in the country, while the Office's projects were generally aligned with the pressing needs of its target populations and organizational priorities, this focus did not translate into measurable higher-level impact during the period. This constraint has severely limited UN Women's ability to communicate results to development partners and also to build more extensive partnerships. These problems stem from the complex environment in which the Office has worked for transformational change, but also from a fragmentation of activities linked to the unpredictability of funding. Indeed, the strategic vision developed at the beginning of the Strategic Note suffered from a lack of funding on the one hand, as well as limited adaptation following the integration of additional projects linked to funding collected ex post facto.

CONCLUSION 5.

UN Women's resources were not able to efficiently support the geographically, thematically, and logistically expansive work of the programme in Haiti.

There was consensus from both external and internal stakeholders on the need for additional resources to improve the efficiency of the Office. Indeed, UN Women has faced human and financial resource challenges to support efficient implementation of its work programme. The expansion of the Office's activities has required the participation of some key staff across several functional areas. It would therefore be advisable for UN Women to review non-essential functions to identify concrete needs and an action plan to address them, while focusing on quality and proactive management of the context.

CONCLUSION 6.

With a wide range of activities, identification and communication of results was hampered by a monitoring approach that did not facilitate measurement of change and would benefit from targeted capacity building.

In terms of methodological approaches to monitoring and reporting, the measurement of change was largely focused on the activity level rather than changes in the lives of women and girls as a result of interventions. Indicators and data collection methods did not reflect the target areas of impact across the thematic areas, limiting clear feedback and communication about the interventions. The monitoring and results framework should equally target stakeholder capacity building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation and were developed through an iterative process of consultation with the UN Women Country Office and the Evaluation Reference Group

At the UN Women Haiti Country Office

- 1 In developing its next Strategic Note, UN Women should ensure an adaptive, focused, and sustainable approach responsive to the important contextual constraints.
- 2 Building on the strong collaborative networks built, UN Women should consolidate and systematize its partnerships to facilitate large-scale impact and coordination.
- 3 UN Women should build capacity in key areas of need – particularly monitoring, evaluation and research – to facilitate a systematic cycle of learning, knowledge management and communication.
- 4 UN Women should strengthen its office management practices for a concerted effort to improve clarity of roles and responsibilities, streamline key processes, and respond to the triple mandate in a coherent and effective manner.

At the UN Women Regional Office

- 5 UN Women should facilitate a robust transition of the Country Office to its next Strategic Note by promoting stronger execution, knowledge management and project cycle management.

Read the report in French [here](#).

DISCLAIMER: The analysis and recommendations of the evaluation are those of the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) and do not necessarily reflect the views of UN WOMEN. This is an independent publication by the UN WOMEN Independent Evaluation and Audit Services (IEAS).