

Executive summary

The Country Portfolio Evaluation of the UN Women Bolivia Country Office was conducted between December 2021 and June 2022 by the Independent Evaluation Service. This type of evaluation represents a systematic assessment of the normative, programmatic and coordination dimensions of UN Women's contribution to development results with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment at the country level.



Purpose and objective

The main objective of this evaluation was to independently assess UN Women Bolivia's progress towards achieving results during the 2018-2022 period of its Strategic Note. This evaluation aims to contribute to decision-making and learning to support the strategic vision, improve the design of the next Strategic Note, and enhance development effectiveness at the country level. The evaluation aims to generate lessons and experiences and suggest new recommendations for future programming.

Context of gender equality and the situation of women in Bolivia



Political representation

In the 2020 electoral process, 49% of women were represented in the Legislative Assembly and a historical majority representation of 56% in the Senate.



Employment and labour informality

The wage gap between men and women in Bolivia is still 26.5%, although this gap has decreased in the last 25 years. The informality rate is higher for women than for men, as almost 70% of economically active women work in the informal sector and lack social security coverage and any type of labour protection.



Violence against women

The rate of physical or sexual violence against women is the highest in the region: 74.7% of women over 15 years of age have been victims of this type of violence at least once. In 2020, 113 femicides were registered.



Care work

On average, women spend almost twice as much time on care work compared to men, about 7 hours a day, with consequences for their rights to work and education.



Poverty

Extreme poverty in 2020 reached 13.7 %, with a higher incidence for women than for men (14.2% and 9.2%, respectively), while moderate poverty reached 39% (40.1% for women and 37.9% for men); extreme poverty is higher in rural areas.

Methodology

The evaluation adopted a non-experimental, theory-based methodology. Several approaches were employed to ensure gender and human rights sensitivity; and the analysis focused on a formative exploration of how UN Women could better position its work for the next Strategic Note.

Overall objective

Conduct a systematic analysis of UN Women's contributions to development results on women's equality and empowerment at the national level in Bolivia, with a focus on strengthening learning, decision-making and accountability.

Evaluation process

1. Design
2. Inception and portfolio analysis
3. Data collection
4. Data analysis and reporting
5. Follow-up and use

121 people consulted



by primary methods, including 101 women and 20 men

+100 documents analysed



Planning documents; annual reports; monitoring reports; donor reports; country strategy papers; knowledge products

Approaches

- Theory-based, contribution analysis
- Gender and human rights sensitive evaluation
- Mixed methods for evidence triangulation
- UN Women stakeholder mapping

4 focus groups

3 from thematic areas and 1 with members of United Nations Country Team Results Group 4.2 (26 people)

Evaluation criteria

- Relevance
- Coherence
- Effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Sustainability
- Gender and human rights

2 surveys



Internal survey of Country Office personnel (24 persons) and survey of external stakeholders (33 persons)

38 persons interviewed



Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders (31 persons) and UN Women staff (7 persons)

Scope of the evaluation



Strategic Note 2018-2022

Evaluation carried out between December 2021 and June 2022



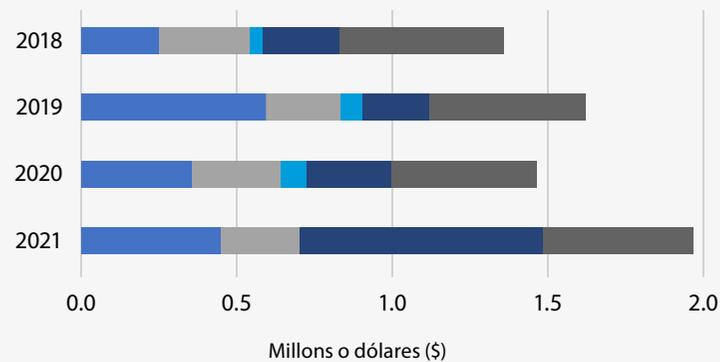
4 thematic areas of results

Governance and political participation; elimination of violence; women, peace, and security; and economic empowerment.

UN Women Bolivia

UN Women has been present in Bolivia since 2010 with a mandate to contribute to the implementation of human rights commitments for women assumed and ratified by the State. The Strategic Note is the main planning tool to advance gender equality and women’s empowerment through UN Women support to normative, coordination and operational work. Of the four programmatic areas of work, the Country Office has dedicated the majority of funding to women’s economic empowerment (26%), women’s political participation and peacebuilding (24%) and ending violence against women and girls (16%).

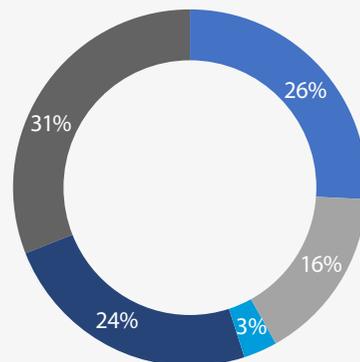
Budget of thematic axes per year



- Economic empowerment
- Elimination of violence
- Governance
- Political participation and peace
- Institutional funds*

* Institutional funds include the budget of the work related to the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation, the institutional budget and extra-budgetary sources.

Budget ratio per thematic axis



General objective of the programme

Generate the conditions for the transformation of the lives of women and girls, particularly those who are disadvantaged



Strategic Note 2018-2022

The Bolivia Country Office programme comprised four impact areas and four outcomes in the 2018-2021 cycle, which was extended to 2022



Budget and human resources

USD 10.7 million in resources in total between 2018-2022 with 19 office personnel

The Country Office’s normative work was cross-cutting, with technical support and capacity building in public policy at the governmental level for gender equality and women’s empowerment. The office also supported the Government in fulfilling its commitments to international agreements. In its coordination work as leader of the gender equality results group of the United Nations Strategic Framework in Bolivia (2018-2022), UN Women coordinated inter-agency work to facilitate gender mainstreaming in the United Nations System in the country.

CONCLUSION 1

The portfolio of projects and initiatives developed by the UN Women Country Office in Bolivia was relevant to the needs of the target population and the country context, and has been aligned with the Government's planning, UN Women global strategic priorities, the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Strategic Framework in Bolivia. Although the measures implemented responded largely to the underlying causes of gender inequality, actions with indigenous and rural women needed to be strengthened.

The UN Women portfolio in Bolivia implemented through the Strategic Note was elaborated in line with organizational strategic priorities and demonstrated adaptation to the needs of the country context and its population. The Country Office was satisfactorily highlighted by rights holders as contributing to the visibility of Bolivian women's priorities. Although it was noted that the office's interventions were in line with the United Nations principle to "leave no one behind", there was still a need to deepen its work with the most marginalized populations, both in identifying and carrying out direct actions with these groups. Networking with other United Nations agencies could contribute to improving both the reach and ultimately the results of work with such groups.

RECOMMENDATION 1



Starting from the premise that when resources are limited it is not possible to address all the populations left behind, work in a focused way on the next UN Women Bolivia Strategic Note by reflecting on who to prioritize, the modality to be used, and the strategic alliances that will be needed to achieve this.

CONCLUSION 2

UN Women was recognized for its gender expertise by partners as well as credibility with governmental bodies. It has been able to liaise with relevant actors at the national and subnational levels, both governmental and non-governmental, as well as with international cooperation agencies. During the country's political and social crisis and high level of polarization, the Country Office managed to remain an impartial actor and assumed a pacifying role.

UN Women Bolivia's networks with governmental and civil society bodies have been effective and, on the basis of coordinated work with the United Nations System, it comprehensively addressed actions in the area of peace and security to integrate the gender perspective in electoral processes and political dialogue. Both because of its credibility and its conciliatory approach in its implementation modality, it has been able to promote constructive spaces for participation during the process of dialogue and consultation for the formulation of a national reconciliation strategy. The office should intensify and diversify its linkages with other key actors for the next Strategic Note, including being able to continue the progress achieved with civil society organisations and promote new connections with emerging actors with the potential to generate change.

RECOMMENDATION 2



Strengthen and diversify linkages with the governmental sector as well as with other civil society actors in order to improve the pathways for networking at sub-national level (greater reach) and to favour the appropriation of projects through their inclusion in the different stages of the project cycle.

CONCLUSION 3

UN Women Bolivia has emerged from a period of internal challenges with a renewed sense of purpose and drive, which presents an opportune moment for the Country Office to rethink its strategies and management mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the next Strategic Note's implementation.

Despite a challenging period in the internal management of the Country Office, the changes introduced in personnel have achieved a high level of resilience to reverse and overcome the situation. Personnel training and job stability is a key factor in achieving good levels of effectiveness and efficiency. Accordingly, while turnover during this period allowed the office to build a more cohesive team and stable working environment, it indicated gaps in the understanding and efficient use of procedures, approaches and tools required by the United Nations, considering time needed to adapt to the new organizational culture.

RECOMMENDATION 3



Enhance Country Office's efficiency and use of management mechanisms through a process of internal capacity building and reflection on strategic guidelines for the agency's next programming period.

CONCLUSION 4

The management of alliances with United Nations System actors was positive, including its linkages through work on joint programmes. The coordination mandate for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations System in the country still needed to be more decisively implemented, with the potential to strengthen its operationalisation.

While significant challenges in United Nations inter-agency coordination remain, an increasing number of agencies have requested technical support or complementarity from UN Women in their projects. Likewise, UN Women's leadership and performance in the United Nations inter-agency group focused on gender was satisfactorily valued by various partner agencies. Additionally, the office has been able to leverage communication campaigns, the Sustainable Development Goal Fund and other collaborative spaces. A strategy for mainstreaming its coordination approach across all United Nations results groups in the next Cooperation Framework remains to be defined. In its future programming, partnership networks can be made more visible and strengthened.

RECOMMENDATION 4



Formalize and implement a UN Women coordination strategy with the Resident Coordinator's Office (aligned with the forthcoming UNCT-SWAP Cooperation Framework and Action Plan) to be a central component of the new Strategic Note. Strengthen UN Women's leadership role in the coordination function of the inter-agency group beyond the previous Outcome Group 4.2, including by deepening the positive experiences with inter-agency alliances and by achieving high-level results.

CONCLUSION 5

Although communications actions facilitated the visibility of key issues over the period, a strategy to change behaviours and norms is needed due to the dispersed effects of communications work.

UN Women's visibility on social networks, as well as in the press and media, was positively valued as having a clear and accessible message for different audiences. Likewise, the linkages achieved with other communication areas of United Nations agencies was highlighted, such as the communication strategy deployed in the framework of peace and security actions. A sustained institutional communication strategy is required that would allow for the discussion of relevant issues and a cross-cutting approach in support of the objectives of the next Strategic Note. Accordingly, it is necessary to reinforce the dissemination and socialization of the Country Office's activities and results more effectively based on a comprehensive vision of its programmes.

RECOMMENDATION 5



In order to enhance UN Women's positioning in the country and to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency to implement the upcoming programme, the Country Office should define a communications strategy aligned with the objectives of the Strategic Note that seeks to convey a clear and inclusive message adapted to different thematic sectors with a systematisation of its knowledge management.

CONCLUSION 6

During this period, the Country Office showed in several areas of work an orientation towards achieving expected impacts. However, in general the changes produced were more limited in scope, and a more coherent advocacy approach across the country portfolio is advisable.

Although the Country Office has achieved important results, the level of impact was incipient. The office worked effectively throughout the three electoral processes during the period to influence the public agenda in relation to the promotion of parity democracy. Meetings were held with women candidates, including with young and indigenous women; women at the national and sub-national levels; women in the peace-building process; and as part of the process to review, modify, and mobilize around Law 348 (Comprehensive Law to Guarantee Women a Life Free from Violence). However, further strengthening of the office's work in this area is necessary, including reflecting on advocacy actions through programmatic interventions.

RECOMMENDATION 6



Strengthen the Country Office's advocacy capacity at the meso and macro levels in the promotion of state policies so that changes are institutionalised and sustained over time. To this end, the office should mainstream advocacy actions as part of its programmatic approach.