

IN BRIEF

COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION **BRAZIL**



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This report presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) of the UN Women Brazil Country Office conducted between December 2021 and July 2022. A CPE is a systematic assessment of the normative, coordination and operational aspects of UN Women's contribution to development results related to gender equality and women's empowerment at the country level.

Background of UN Women in Brazil

UN Women has been present in Brazil since the organization's establishment in January 2011. The office was initially responsible for the Southern Cone countries and in 2013 assumed the status of a Country Office. The UN Women presence in Brazil was built on the work and legacy of UNIFEM, which was established in 1992 in the country. The Strategic Note is the main planning tool for UN Women's work to advance gender equality and women's empowerment through the implementation of its integrated triple mandate of normative, coordination and operational work. It initially covered the 2017–2021 period and was later extended to 2022. A midterm review led to changes to prioritize the COVID-19 pandemic response, streamline the results framework and strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus.

UN Women Brazil provides integrated policy advice, capacity development and technical assistance, social mobilization and advocacy, and data and knowledge generation, among other functions to inform policymaking and law-making. UN Women is the only United Nations entity with the exclusive mandate to promote gender equality, including leading and coordinating the accountability of the United Nations system with regard to the respective gender equality mandates of its member organizations. UN Women also provides inter-governmental normative support at the global and national levels, as well as direct support and service delivery.

BRAZIL COUNTRY CONTEXT



Sixth largest population in the world with more than **212 million inhabitants**; largest country in terms of both size and population in the Latin America region.



High level of human development – ranked **84 of 189 countries** – and middle-income country, although aggregated figures hide considerable inequalities among different population groups.



Ninety-fifth in the world on the Gender Inequality Index. Women represent nearly 52 per cent of the Brazilian population but hold **less than 15 per cent of the seats in parliament**.



Structural inequalities across income, gender, **race**, ethnicity, age and location continue to be key determinants for access to rights and services.



Data from 2020 shows that 34.5 per cent of homicides of women were classified as **femicides**, which increased to **1,350 cases** of which **61.6 per cent of the victims were black women**.



The **COVID-19 pandemic** increased the exposure of certain population groups to situations of **risk and violence**.

Evaluation purpose, objectives and use

The purpose of the evaluation was to foster both accountability and learning through a participatory approach assuming a summative and formative focus by assessing results achieved and providing input to the design of the next Strategic Note of the UN Women Brazil Country Office. Objectives of the evaluation included to:

- Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment as defined in the Strategic Note.
- Analyse how a human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the design and implementation of the Strategic Note.
- Provide actionable recommendations with respect to the development of the next Strategic Note, considering the recovery and response to COVID-19.
- Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples of innovation that support gender equality and human rights.

Intended users and uses of the evaluation

The primary intended users of this evaluation are UN Women management and Country Office personnel, the UN Women Executive Board, the national Government of Brazil and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Intended uses include: learning and generation of knowledge for key stakeholders on the promotion of the gender equality and women's empowerment agenda in Brazil; strategic decision-making for the UN Women Brazil Country Office and key counterparts; Accountability as a key principle of the work in the United Nations system; and capacity development and mobilization, which was part of the whole evaluation process from planning and design to the dissemination of results.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY



Gender-responsive evaluation



Mixed methods for triangulating evidence



Theory-based analysis



Deeper analysis of a project sample and project case study



Outcome mapping and contribution analysis

118 people consulted



97%
Women

3%
Men

29 semi-structured interviews with 30 UN Women personnel and partners and 22 focus groups with 88 stakeholders and beneficiaries

100+ documents analysed



Planning documents, reports, documents, national strategic documentation, knowledge products, midterm review, internal audit and others

132 respondents to 4 surveys



UN Women personnel survey: 39
Stakeholder survey: 63
One Win Leads to Another (OWLA) project trained CSOs: 25
OWLA project coalition: 5

UN WOMEN IN BRAZIL: KEY FACTS

23.1 M
US\$ total budget

The Strategic Note 2017–2022 had a total budget of US\$23.1 million with marked annual growth since 2017. The Country Office was supported by 31 donors throughout Strategic Note implementation.

41
personnel

Country Office personnel included 8 positions on the operations team, 2 in the Programme Management Support Unit, and 28 in the Programme Unit, in addition to the Representative, a Coordination Specialist and a Communications Associate.

3
main outcome areas

Resources were distributed evenly across thematic portfolios



Governance and Participation 30%



Women's Economic Empowerment 27%



Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls 23%

Conclusions and recommendations

CONCLUSION 1

UN Women was recognized as a key voice on the gender agenda in Brazil and found to have contributed to achieving gender equality results with an array of partners. UN Women also demonstrated its relevance in the context of COVID-19, adapting to respond to the needs of women and girls in a crisis context. There was a demand for continued and expanded dialogue on COVID-19 and other issues, as well as potential for enhancing coherence and consistency among the myriad of activities within the Country Office.

Over the period of Strategic Note implementation, UN Women leveraged its work through a wide range of partnerships, including with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), CSOs, subnational governments, the parliament, the private sector and other multi-stakeholder forums.

The Country Office was responsive to grass-roots movements representing groups such as indigenous populations, black women, domestic workers and Venezuelan migrant women. This demonstrated its niche and value in engaging with relevant groups in situations of increased vulnerability in line with the “leave no one behind” principle.

There remained a demand for more dialogue, advocacy and collaboration in different sectors, which indicated potential for further enhancing partnerships.

CONCLUSION 2

UN Women Brazil played an effective leadership role in the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity; enhanced empowerment, leadership and political participation of historically excluded groups; and positioned the gender equality and women’s empowerment agenda with the private sector. It also helped to develop capacity at the individual and institutional levels to support long-term change in some areas. Increased involvement of state institutions at different levels would have enhanced the potential for more sustainable results, along with stronger attention ascribed to sustainability issues in project design

Effective use of the UN Women coordination mandate was evidenced by the Country Office leadership of the United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity and the application of the UNCT System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNCT-SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard, including the intersectionality with race into the tool’s methodology as well as systematic follow-up with partners. Progress by United Nations agencies in mainstreaming gender presented a corresponding set of wider actions, programming and opportunities for joint work and enhanced dialogue with the system.

UN Women Brazil implemented projects with a strong potential for gender transformative change by targeting deeper causes of gender inequality through the promotion of the empowerment, leadership and political participation of traditionally excluded groups.

On the other hand, there were opportunities for more strategic engagement with the legislative branch on advocacy and policy debate, as well as with the private sector and other partners. Taking into account the key role of state institutions in developing public policy to maintain results over time, sustainability strategies could be more explicitly embedded into project design.

HIGHLIGHTED RESULTS ACHIEVED

- UN Women contributed to increasing the political participation of women facing multiple forms of discrimination and reinforcing the implementation of electoral legislation for women.
- Through the Win-Win: Gender Equality Means Good Business project, UN Women promoted corporate culture in the private sector, encouraging the participation of women in leadership positions and diversity inclusion. A total of 7,759 companies accessed knowledge/tools by participating in events.
- The United Nations Interagency Thematic Group on Gender, Race and Ethnicity in Brazil, led by UN Women, enhanced its management over time with a structured approach to deliver quality policy guidelines and tools such as the UNCT SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard.
- UN Women supported a gender-based response for Venezuelan migrants in Brazil and the provision of vocational training for Venezuelan women, which continued during the pandemic. Sex- and age-disaggregated data is now mandatory for Response for Venezuelans (R4V) partners.
- UN Women contributed to promoting a legal and social environment that is more conducive to the protection of women and girls. The One Win Leads to Another project reached nearly 1.9 million people via social media, and 1,200 girls benefited from its curriculum.

CONCLUSION 3

UN Women made significant strides to enhance the systematization of its work modalities by establishing clear procedures and expected results and adopting stronger accountability practices in the Country Office. Challenges remained at the operational level, which negatively affected continuity of actions over time, human resource stability and personnel workloads.

The Country Office made advances to enhance accountability practices, such as establishing clear rules, procedures and tools for planning processes and knowledge management; developing theories of change for the Strategic Note and its main programmes; and monitoring results to support decision-making and enhance institutional accountability. This has brought about important gains in organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Nevertheless, several problems hindered the implementation capacity of the office, in particular high turnover rates, communication issues with partners, as well as perceptions of high workloads and a stressful work environment.

Modalities such as direct implementation also imposed a high burden on the office, which was not well adapted to deal with grass-roots movements and informal organizations. Results-based management practices, including monitoring capacity and the indicator framework, would enhance the ability of the Country Office to track, measure and report on potential impacts.

CONCLUSION 4

UN Women was responsive to the principle to leave no one behind and largely incorporated populations in situations of vulnerability into its work. This helped to address deeper causes of inequality through access to power, resources and opportunities, leading to the empowerment of women and girls. There remained scope to more explicitly target other key populations in line with United Nations principles, such as persons with disabilities.

Most Country Office projects over the period incorporated the leave no one behind principle, and work was largely focused on addressing the needs of populations in situations of vulnerability from a political, economic and social point of view. The work of UN Women has been on social mobilization and evidence-based advocacy, capacity development, knowledge-sharing, policy debate and training. All activities aim to question the basis of inequality between women and men. In this sense, the nature of the activities of the Strategic Note has been generally oriented towards supporting gender transformative change. Gender inequality was addressed through an intersectional approach in which income, ethnic and racial disparities appeared as mutually connected. This resulted in a more integrated response from UN Women Brazil, which tailored relevant parts of its projects to specific populations such as domestic workers and black, indigenous and quilombola women. The Country Office embodied a model of change oriented towards structural impact that will only be validated in the long run. There was nonetheless still scope for stronger mainstreaming of age and disability perspectives into these portfolios, which were absent with the exception of one joint programme.

RECOMMENDATION 1



Implement measures in the **conceptualization, execution, and monitoring of the next Strategic Note** to further enhance programmatic focus and coherence, building on the notable gains made since the midterm review exercise with a view to enhancing the strategic positioning of the Country Office.

RECOMMENDATION 2



Review the **partnership framework and capacity development strategy** with a view to foster links with the Government, systematize private sector engagement, clarify the role of the Civil Society Advisory Group and engagement with CSOs, and enhance dialogue with donors and United Nations partners in Brazil.

RECOMMENDATION 3



Further **promote a culture of collaboration and innovation**, while also strengthening results-based management practices to embed a more systematic data, monitoring and reporting ecosystem for capturing and communicating results and fine-tuning Country Office programming.

RECOMMENDATION 4



In the next Strategic Note, build on the Country Office's **track record of programming the leave no one behind principle** with a stronger focus on intersecting types of vulnerability.