

TRANSFORM



Gender-Responsive Evaluations: good practice approaches and methods

UN WOMEN

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IFAD

Raising the bar for gender-transformative approaches at IFAD

UNECE

Assessing gender mainstreaming in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

UNFPA

Accelerating the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Evaluative evidence on gender mainstreaming from the Beijing Declaration to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda



Dear Readers,

We are pleased to present this special edition of Transform, *Gender-Responsive Evaluations: good practice approaches and methods*. In 2020, women's rights take centre stage, beginning with the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and marking five years since the adoption of the Substantiable Development Goals. More than ever, systematic evidence and knowledge on what works for gender equality, why, for whom, and in what circumstances is needed to catalyse equitable, inclusive, sustainable progress and to amplify our impact.

In 2019, the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service initiated a good practice review to identify trends and feature some of the ways in which United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) partners have integrated gender-responsive approaches and methods in their evaluation processes to assess gender equality results. This resulted in a recent publication, *Good Practices in Gender-Responsive Evaluations*. In addition, we invited our partners to share their insights and perspectives in this special edition of the Transform magazine. We warmly welcome our contributors from IFAD, UNECE, UNFPA and African Development Bank.

Exchanging knowledge and practice among UN agencies provided us with an opportunity to learn from our partners about how they integrate gender perspectives into evaluation practices, and also to step back and review our own evaluation approach. This inevitably reveals existing challenges and what more needs to be done. As a leading agency for Gender-Responsive Evaluation, it reminds us of the need to continually update our evaluation practices with more innovative thinking, to provide a truly valuable contribution to this constantly changing work with socio-economic dynamics at the local and international level.

We hope that our readers enjoy this special edition of Transform and find it useful and engaging. More importantly, we hope it inspires you to join our endeavours in enhancing and establishing evaluation practices that further advance the status of women and girls.

Inga Sniukaitė

Chief, Independent Evaluation Service
Email: [@IngaSniukaitė](mailto:inga.sniukaitė@unwomen.org)

**Think Beyond.
Stay Ahead.**

EDITORS

Inga Sniukaitė
Soo Yeon Kim
Christina Sollitto

LEAD CONSULTANT FOR GRE

Chada Jiha

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IFAD
UNFPA
UNECE
African Development Bank

COPY EDITOR

Catherine Simes

ART DIRECTION & DESIGN

Yamrote Alemu Haileselassie

UN WOMEN

Independent Evaluation and Audit Services
220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017
ies@unwomen.org
www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/evaluation
Twitter: @unwomenEval

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A special thanks to the Evaluation Department at the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)

★ SPECIAL EDITION

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ON THE COVER: Journée de la femme en Centrafrique « Bâtir intelligemment, innover pour le changement »

UN/MINUSCA - HERVE SEREFIO



Gender-Responsive Evaluations: good practice approaches and methods

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25 years on, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) remains a visionary and progressive blueprint for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. It sets out 12 areas of critical concern that are at the heart of transforming unequal gender relations and has generating substantive and progressive change across the economic, political, social and environmental dimensions of women and girls' lives.

Building and reinforcing the inter-linkages and indivisibility of women's rights and the 12 critical areas of concern, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) has similarly adopted a comprehensive approach to the achievement of gender equality by creating a stand-alone goal (Sustainable Development Goal 5 [SDG 5]) and mainstreaming gender-related targets across all other goal areas.

While political commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) has steadily gained visibility, strength and traction in international, regional and national level norms and discourse, progress in closing gender gaps in areas such as politics; the economy and the world of work, including the gender wage gap; violence against women; and unpaid care and domestic work has been uneven and much too slow. No country in the world today is on track to achieve gender equality by 2030.

Bridging the disconnect between robust normative commitments and the lack of progress on gender equality presents a strategic opportunity to harness the catalytic role of gender-responsive evaluation and the use of evaluative evidence to drive and accelerate progress across the SDGs. By generating knowledge and evidence of what works (or not) for GEWE, why, for whom, and in what circumstances, gender-responsive evaluation can crucially influence and shape policies, programmes and investments to ensure that outcomes are equitable, inclusive and reach women and girls at risk of being left further behind.

The 2030 Agenda places elevated importance on GEWE for achieving inclusive and sustainable development and on monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in national and global review and follow-up processes. This strategically positions gender-responsive evaluation as a transformative agent of change for achieving the gender equality commitments across the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda in collaboration with UN system and national partners. To promote and deepen gender-responsive evaluation praxis, this special edition of Transform on the occasion of the 25th anniversary and review of the BPfA showcases good and promising gender-responsive evaluation approaches and methods used by UNEG partners to assess the contributions of policies, programmes or a portfolio of interventions to the achievement of gender equality results.

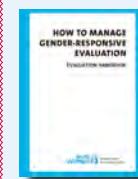
Gender-Responsive Evaluation

Gender-responsive evaluation is a systematic and impartial assessment that provides credible and reliable evidence-based information about the extent to which an intervention has resulted in progress (or the lack thereof) towards intended and/or unintended results regarding GEWE. It consists of two main components:

First, it assesses the "degree to which gender and power relationships – including structural and other causes that give rise to inequities, discrimination and unfair power relations – change as a result of an intervention."

Second, it entails a process that is inclusive, participatory and respectful of all stakeholders, especially in ensuring that women's voices, including different groups, are prevalent throughout the evaluation.

download



*UN Women Evaluation Handbook:
How to manage
gender-responsive
evaluation*



*Good practices
in gender-
responsive
evaluations*

GENDER-RESPONSIVE EVALUATION APPROACHES

Among UNEG partners, good practice gender-responsive evaluation approaches tend to take three forms. The first and most common approach, especially in project-level evaluations, incorporates gender equality and human rights as a stand-alone criterion or as mainstreamed across the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Another method combines theory-based approaches with the use of one, or a combination of gender-analytical frameworks, including sector-specific gender frameworks. This approach facilitates a more nuanced assessment of the type, effectiveness and quality of gender equality results achieved.

Finally, recent gender-responsive evaluation approaches, especially corporate-level evaluations of gender-targeted programming, are adopting more systems thinking and complexity-responsive designs, including the use of multiple evaluation approaches to assess and interpret gender equality outcomes of policies, programmes or a portfolio of interventions.

The following table summarizes these good practice approaches and identifies some of the evaluations which have applied them.

Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluations

Fosters the inclusion and participation of different stakeholders, particularly of women and men at a higher risk of having their rights violated and further disaggregating stakeholders by their human rights roles as either duty bearers or rights holders.



Makes power dynamics that entrench underlying causes of exclusion, discrimination and inequality more explicit and **assesses whether and how an intervention might have contributed or led to changes in these root causes.**

Evaluations: [UN Joint Programme on Advancing and Sustaining Gender Equality Gains in Rwanda: UN Women Corporate Evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment](#)

Feminist

Examines issues of power, specifically identifying where and with whom power resides and how it is exercised.



Seeks opportunities for reversing gender inequalities and prioritizes women and girls' experiences and voices, including women and girls in vulnerable situations.

Evaluations: [Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to UN system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women: Independent Global Programme Evaluation of UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality](#)

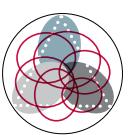
Participatory democratic evaluation



Engages grantee communities (e.g. rights holders) in processes of dialogue and action and empowers them to monitor and evaluate their own performance through self-reviews.

Evaluations: [Independent Global Programme Evaluation of UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality \(2009-2017\)](#)

ISE4GEMS



Inclusive Systemic Evaluation for Gender Equality, Environments and Marginalized Voices (ISE4GEMS): an innovative, complexity-responsive evaluation approach which integrates an intersectional analysis of gender equality, marginalized voices and the environment - three cross-cutting dimensions relevant for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Evaluations: [Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to Women's Political Participation and Leadership](#)

Linking theory-based evaluation and gender-analysis frameworks, including sector-specific frameworks



Ensures gender-responsive methods are applied throughout the evaluation and supports evaluators not only to assess the contributions of intervention(s) for GEWE but also **to better understand the context which shapes the relationships and dynamics of any situation.** Common gender-analytical frameworks include: Longwe Women's Empowerment Framework; Harvard Gender Roles; and Social Relations Framework. Sector-specific gender-analytical frameworks include: Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI); and UNESCO Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media (GSIM).

Evaluations: [UN Women Country Portfolio Evaluation \(Malawi\); UN Women Country Portfolio Evaluation \(Palestine 2014-2017\); Gender Evaluation of the Work of the Department of Global Communications](#)



GOOD PRACTICE EVALUATION METHODS AND TOOLS

UNEG partner evaluations relied on mixed methods and used triangulation to validate the various sources of information. Mixed-method evaluations recognize the importance of listening to multiple voices, each with a different perspective on the programme(s) and processes being evaluated. Typically, these methods have consisted of a desk/portfolio review; analysis of datasets; interviews with key stakeholders; focus groups with stakeholders; participant observation and surveys (i.e. organizational or stakeholder/user). However, recent evaluations have developed or employed more enhanced evaluation methods and tools to better capture the quality of gender equality results as well as the complexities of gender equality interventions related to power, voice, participation and access – essential dimensions in advancing human rights and gender equality.

Outcome mapping

Helps generate learning about a programme's influence on the progression of change in its direct partners, and therefore helps evaluators think more systematically and pragmatically about what they are doing and to adaptively manage variations in strategies to bring about desired outcomes.



UN Women used outcome mapping to measure partnership effectiveness along a continuum of pre-identified expected results: basic, good or advanced that worked towards the achievement of a hypothesized partnership outcome and to understand the contributions of strategic partnerships to GEWE.

Evaluations: [Corporate Evaluation on Strategic Partnerships for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#)

Critical Systems Heuristics (CSH)

Rooted in systems thinking, CSH **brings together multiple perspectives** to reach a way of framing value judgements.



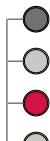
It can be used to map and further disaggregate key categories of stakeholders by their human rights roles (e.g. rights holders, principal duty bearers, primary, secondary and tertiary duty bearers) in order to make the relational power dynamics between groups more explicit. It is also a method to ensure that the voices and perspectives of women are heard.

Evaluations: [Evaluation of UNFPA support to the prevention, response to and elimination of gender-based violence, including harmful practices \(2012-2017\)](#)

Contribution analysis

Because gender equality results are seldom attributable to one organization, contribution analysis helps to determine **the influence**

Gender Results Effectiveness Scale



Elaborates a common framework to measure the effectiveness of **gender equality results based on a five-point ratings scale**. The ratings progressively move from gender negative to gender transformative, with gender transformative defined as results that contributed to changes in norms, cultural values, power structures

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