

# PUBLICATIONS READER SURVEY REPORT



UN Women Eastern and  
Southern Africa

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**UN WOMEN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Nairobi, September 2016



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This report is the product of a survey conducted by the Knowledge Management Unit of UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa.

We gratefully acknowledge the overall leadership and guidance provided by the Deputy Regional Director for UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa, Ms. Simone Ellis Oluoch-Olunya.

The team of authors who conducted the survey was led by Charles Omondi Ogolla, an independent consultant and researcher, and Jack Onyisi Abebe, Knowledge Management and Research Specialist at UN Women.

During the course of the survey, the authors consulted with various stakeholders and actors in the region including Country Offices, researchers, policy makers development partners including the entire UN family, the African Union, DFID, Ford Foundation, World Bank, African Development Bank, among others, the private sector, media agencies, academic institutions and universities, regional economic commissions, governments, international NGOs and CSOs among other stakeholders and experts working with UN Women both at country and regional levels.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the month of June 2016, UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa conducted a publications reader survey with the aim of continually improving the user-friendliness, practicality and overall quality of their publications. Specifically, it inquired about the publications commonly sought by stakeholders of UN Women in the entire region, what form of publications are being sought by diverse audiences and how often the publications are consulted by the audiences, which parties seek them and in which format they preferred, whether electronic or hard copies, and the ways in which the UN Women could improve upon the presentation of their publications to accelerate demand by diverse stakeholders. This survey marked a first step in a desirable process to strengthen UN Women publications quality assurance processes and development and policy impacts in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The survey design was cross-sectional, which utilized the Survey Monkey platform to reach the respondents. The survey was rated second in response rate from the global survey platform. The study involved a systematic questionnaire distribution to diverse actors who included country offices, researchers, policy makers and development partners, including the African Union, DFID, Canada, Ford Foundation, World Bank, among others, the private sector, media agencies,

African Development Bank, academic institutions and universities, regional economic commissions, governments, international NGOs and CSOs, among other stakeholders and experts working with UN Women both at the multi-country level and regional level. Survey questions focused on how UN Women publications' information is accessed for development and policy-making, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa. A total of 78 respondents were reached.

## Key Findings

The survey confirms that UN Women publications are widely useful to a diverse audience including the UN agencies, NGOs and CSOs, policy makers, development agencies, private sector agencies, academic institutions and gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) advocates. The analysis revealed that UN Women publications are reader-friendly and position GEWE as a core principle of development. While this is affirmed by 97 per cent of the respondents, only 2.7 per cent had not consulted UN Women publications. The respondents also felt that this positioning contributes towards the fulfilment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment, which is a driver towards inclusive and sustainable growth without leaving behind anyone, including women and girls. With this level of satisfaction, it is imperative for the UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa to concentrate on a targeted approach in terms of addressing demand-driven needs of the beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

From the study it was clear that UN Women publications and studies on GEWE issues have been responsible for many improvements in the quality of life for women and girls. The respondents affirmed having used research and evidence from the studies in development interventions and policy-making processes aimed at improving the lives of women and girls through more effective policies that respond to regional priorities and use resources more efficiently to better meet citizens' needs in various perspectives of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The survey also notes that English is the most preferred language for accessing UN Women publications with 96.1 per cent of the respondents preferring it, while the other preferred languages included French (1.3 per cent), Portuguese (1.3 per cent) and Arabic (1.3 per cent). Half of the respondents (50 per cent) consult UN Women publications periodically, specifically whenever necessary.

The study further finds that the most convenient means of accessing UN Women publications is through electronic format, downloadable from the UN Women website, with 80.8 per cent of the respondents acknowledging the mode. In terms of accessibility of the publications online, 66.7 per cent of the respondents indicated that they have the knowledge on how to access the online UN Women publications, with more than a third of the respondents (33.3 per cent) lacking such knowledge.

In terms of visibility of the publications, only 26.7 per cent of the respondents were in agreement that UN Women publications are sufficiently visible and well marketed to the public, while majority of the respondents, constituting of 44 per cent, said that UN Women publications are not sufficiently visible and well marketed to the public and 29.3 per cent did not have any position as to the visibility and marketability of the publications. From the findings it is thus important for UN Women to address the issues

leading to insufficient visibility and marketability of its publications.

Majority of respondents (93.2 per cent) were content with the user-friendliness and the design and layout of UN Women publications with 5.4 per cent terming it as fair while only 1.4 per cent termed the design and layout of the publications as poor. In terms of quality of the substantive content in UN Women publications, 97.2 per cent of the respondents were in agreement that the contents of UN Women publications were of high quality, with only 1.4 per cent terming their quality as being fair and another 1.4 per cent indicating that the quality of the contents was poor. In addition, 84.4 per cent of the respondents indicated that they would be happy to receive regular e-mail updates about new UN Women publication titles. Almost all the respondents, 98.4 per cent, indicated that they would readily recommend UN Women publications to other users affirming further confidence in UN Women publications and their value in positioning the GEWE agenda in the region.

## Institutional and Strategic Implications

The survey has pointed to a clear commitment by UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa to produce quality publications. The fact that the publications are supply-driven rather than demand-driven is worrying, however. If UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa were to make targeted and action-oriented interventions from its publications based on the survey, the following directions are recommended:

- Develop demand-driven publications based on analysis of contexts in terms of what situation presents an opportunity for development of a publication

and whether it relates to the regional and country offices' needs and need for targeted actors on GEWE.

- Develop a dissemination strategy following findings that point to the need to accelerate access and wider dissemination of UN Women publications through diverse mechanisms, mostly online dissemination. Develop and avail live and continuously available feedback mechanisms for UN Women publications.
- Create virtual information centers and libraries both in country offices and at the regional level in partnership with other bilateral and multilateral development agencies focusing on GEWE issues.

## Conclusion and Positioning

In conclusion, there can be demand for publications only if potential users know they exist. It is imperative that UN Women intensifies its focus to better identify audiences, inform them of relevant publications, provide means of access to these publications and extend

them in formats and languages appropriate to their situation. It is clear, however, that there is a strong commitment to enhance the role of the UN Women as a knowledge broker oriented to GEWE, and more needs to be done to act on this commitment.

# 1

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1

### Purpose of the Survey

UN Women produces an extensive range of publications and knowledge products that aim to share information, express innovative ideas and practical experiences, provide evidence for policy engagements and discussions, inform development interventions and programming on GEWE and stimulate debate on various aspects of gender equality and women's empowerment. The dissemination of these publications and ensuring action oriented to gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the output areas of focus for UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa. Analytically, the value of any publications produced by UN Women is dependent on effective and targeted dissemination to present and future audiences. In fact, without outreach, the efforts of knowledge workers are wasted.

Through this publications reader survey, the region hopes to continually improve the user-friendliness,

practicality and overall quality of UN Women's publications. Specifically, the survey inquired about the publications commonly sought by stakeholders of UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa, what form of publications are being sought by diverse audiences and how often the publications are consulted by the audiences, which parties seek them and in what format, whether electronic or hard copies, accessibility for development and policy-making (particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa) and ways in which UN Women could improve on the presentation of their publications to accelerate demand by diverse stakeholders. This survey marked a first step in a desirable process to strengthen publications quality assurance processes and development and policy impacts of the publications produced by UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa. This report draws primarily on the survey findings.

## 1.2

### UN Women Eastern and Southern Africa

In line with the UN Women Regional architecture, the UN Women Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa in Nairobi provides support services to the

- Intergovernmental Support
- Representation and Advocacy

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