

# Analytical Overview of Joint UN Gender Programme Portfolio

Final Report

Evaluation Office

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#### Analytical Overview Team:

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<b>Acronyms</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1 Approach	13
1.1.1 Quantitative Data	13
1.1.2 Qualitative Information	14
1.2 Limitations	15
1.3 Defining the JGP Portfolio	16
1.4 Structure of the Report	17
<b>2 Background to and Rationale for the JGP Evaluation</b>	<b>18</b>
2.1 Brief Background to Joint Programmes as Part of UN Reform	18
2.2 Effectiveness of UN Development Effort of GEWE	19
2.3 Rationale for the JGP Evaluation	20
2.3.1 A joint and Rights-Based Evaluation	21
<b>3 Quantitative Desk Analysis of the JGP Portfolio</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 Evolution of JGP Portfolio over Time	23
3.1.1 2001-2005	24
3.1.2 2006-2010	24
3.2 Partners	25
3.2.1 Number of Participating UN Partners	25
3.2.2 Lead Agency	27
3.3 Geography	28
3.4 Thematic Area	29
3.5 Planned Timeframe	30
3.6 Funding	31
3.7 Summary	32
<b>4 Findings from Qualitative Desk Analysis</b>	<b>34</b>
4.1 Sources of Qualitative Information	34
4.1.1 JGP Evaluations/Reviews to Date	34
4.1.2 Other Relevant JP Documents	35
4.1.3 Stakeholders	36
4.2 Issues and Information Needs	36
4.2.1 Quality of “Jointness”	36
4.2.2 JGP Design	40
4.2.3 Effectiveness in Terms of Results	41
4.2.4 Sustainability, National Level Partnerships, National Ownership & People-Centred Approaches	43
4.2.5 Efficiency and Operational Effectiveness	45
<b>5 Emerging Priorities &amp; Reflections for the Future Terms of Reference</b>	<b>47</b>
5.1 Strategic Priorities	47
5.1.1 Results and Added Value of JGPs	47
5.1.2 Sustainability, National Level Partnerships, Ownership and People-Centred Approaches	48
5.1.3 Synergies	49
5.2 Evaluability	49
5.2.1 Assessing Results	50
5.2.2 Assessing “Jointness”	50

5.2.3 Integrating Human Rights	50
5.2.4 Data and Time Lapse	51
5.3 A Mixed Method Evaluation	52
5.3.1 Documentation Examination	52
5.3.2 Case Study Approach	52
5.3.3 Survey Possibilities	54
5.3.4 Team Expertise	55

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## **Annexes**

Annex 1: Terms of Reference
Annex 2: JGP Portfolio Table
Annex 3: List of JGPs with Missing Programme Documents
Annex 4: List of Stakeholders Consulted
Annex 5: List of Documents Consulted
Annex 6: UNDG Definitions for Fund Management Modalities

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## Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CEE-CIS	Central & East Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States region
CCA	Common Country Assessments
CSO	Civil society organisation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAO	Delivering as One
DFID	UK Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EVAW	Eliminating violence against women
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GEWE	Gender equality/Women's Empowerment
GRB	Gender responsive budgeting
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ILO	International Labour Organization
JGPs	Joint Gender Programmes
JPCs	Joint Programme Coordinators
LAC	Latin American and Caribbean region
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDG Fund	Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDTF	Multi-donor trust fund
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NSGE-DV	National Strategy for Gender Equality and Domestic Violence
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSCE	Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe
RBA	Rights Based Approach
RC Office	Resident Coordinator Office
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMART	Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely

TCPR	Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDG/DOCO	United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNFT ERAW	United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organization
WHR	Women's human rights



## STUDY BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

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This report is a pre-study to support the scoping process for the future Evaluation of Joint Gender Programmes (JGPs) in the UN system, which will evaluate the UN's joint programmes in the area of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment. It provides the drafters of the terms of reference for the future JGPs evaluation with qualitative and quantitative analytical overview of the JGPs portfolio and reflections on the emerging strategic priorities, evaluability and methodological options.

According to UNDG's *Guidance Note on Joint Programmes* (2003), a joint programme involves two or more UN organisations and (sub-) national partners that have jointly signed a programme document. JGPs have been defined as those that have an explicit objective of: empowering women; and/or promoting gender equality at the strategic level; and/or women and/or girls may constitute the main beneficiaries/programme partners. Thus, joint programmes that may mainstream equality between men and women (which in theory are all joint programmes) but have other overall goals, have not been included in the portfolio.

The authors have established a database that maps out the characteristics of 113 JGPs from 2001 to 2010 according to nine main characteristics. The data for JGPs that were initiated before 2006 are incomplete, but the data for the JGPs initiated between 2006 and 2010 generally have high reliability.

The most significant challenge for the study was obtaining reliable data since none of the agency databases have systems to allow for straightforward searches of joint programmes. They frequently lack consolidated and systematic information, contain errors and are not regularly updated. While the team has used innovative search tactics and an extensive number of hours trying to identify JGPs, it is possible that the database does not contain all

existing JGPs. The JGP database is furthermore limited to information provided by the signed programme documents – thus any changes since the signing of programme documents may not have been captured by the database.

The gathering of qualitative data focused on obtaining an overview of key issues and information needs. The data were acquired through consultations and interviews with over 30 key stakeholders and the analysis of 20 evaluations/reviews that were located. While some useful information has been gleaned from these, it has been relatively limited since the level of quality is often inconsistent and most are weak on the joint aspect of joint programming. To provide an analytical overview of the policy environment that underpins the rationale for the future evaluation, a review of dozens of relevant policy documents, reports and strategies was also conducted.

## KEY FINDINGS

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### Findings from the quantitative desk analysis: Characteristics of the JGPs portfolio

In the beginning of the decade, at most, a couple of JGPs were initiated each year. The budgets were also modest, with a median size of US\$ 320,000. The second part of the decade saw a rise in the median budgeted programme size to US\$ 2 million, with a dramatic rise in the total number of JGPs in 2008 and 2009. This can partly be explained by the addition of MDG Fund resources. However, the largest average size of JGPs was in 2010 (US\$ 7 million), which was after the MDG Fund contributions were distributed. From 2006 to 2010, the total *planned* value of the JGP portfolio was US\$ 463 million and the total *funded* value at the time of signing of the programmes documents was US\$ 274 million.

Twenty-four different UN entities have participated in at least one JGP, with UNFPA, UNDP, former UNIFEM and UNICEF participating in over 60 JGPs

each. UNDP, UNFPA and former UNIFEM were also by far the most prevalent in the role of lead agency. The specialized agencies WHO, ILO, UNESCO and FAO are the second most frequent participants. The majority of JGPs are made up of three to four participating UN agencies, while one-third of JGPs have five or more participating UN agencies – some have over 11.

Africa has the greatest number of JGPs and accounts for the largest portion (55%) of the total planned financial value of the JGP portfolio from 2006 to 2010. The Asia/Pacific and the LAC regions account for 14% each of the total planned financial value of the JGP portfolio, but in LAC the individual JGPs are much smaller in size.

Multi-sectoral JGPs are few, but they have large budgets that account for 33% of the aggregated planned financial value of the JGP portfolio. In terms of number of JGPs, the eliminating violence against women (EVAW) thematic area is the largest – roughly accounting for just less than one-third of all JGPs and one-third of the aggregated planned financial value of the entire JGP portfolio. JGPs in the governance area are almost as numerous as EVAW JGPs. However, they have much smaller budgets that amount to only 13% of the aggregated planned financial value of the JGP portfolio – which is similar to the value of the health (13%) and economic empowerment (9%) JGPs. The number and value of the education, trafficking and HIV/AIDS JGPs represent only a few percent each of the total budget. Only five JGPs representing four thematic areas have objectives with a conflict-related angle.

Switzerland and the UK. Other national governments have also provided resources – financial or in-kind – for at least 13 JGPs.

### Findings from the qualitative desk analysis: Convergence on strategic priorities

This study has demonstrated that there is considerable concurrence among stakeholders, evaluations/reviews and policy documents regarding the overall priorities for the evaluation. First, there is a common perspective on the use of the evaluation. While it will be used to *render judgment about the overall merit or worth* of JGPs, the principle uses will be to *facilitate improvements* and *generate knowledge*. These uses should guide the scope and approach of the evaluation.

Second, the analysis reveals that the priorities for the evaluation's strategic scope converge on three areas. In relation to these areas, the data suggest that effectiveness, sustainability and possible impact are the dominant evaluation criteria to assess the JGPs. Relevance issues are less prominent but still pertinent. Efficiency and operational effectiveness issues were generally considered less important for learning from and improving JGPs. While the data reveals many challenges in this area, stakeholders all agreed that these were not unique to JGPs, but common to many or most joint programmes. It was a concern that this evaluation maintains its focus on the effectiveness of joint programmes and not be taken over by systemic operational efficiency issues that relate to all joint programmes in all sectors.

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