

# TRANSFORM

**Independent corporate evaluation of UN Women's approach to violence against women prevention and response: Navigating changes in global and regional contexts**

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## Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 31th issue of Transform, which features the Independent Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Approach to Violence Against Women Prevention and Response: Navigating Changes in Global and Regional Contexts.

Around the world, women and girls are facing heightened risks of violence amid the compounding effects of armed conflict, displacement, climate-related disasters, food insecurity, economic shocks, and political instability. These overlapping crises have not only intensified existing forms of violence but also given rise to new and more complex threats.

Against this backdrop, UN Women continues to lead efforts to place violence against women and girls firmly on the global agenda. Through collaboration with multi-sectoral partners, the Entity is working to strengthen evidence driven, human rights based comprehensive prevention and response approaches at country, regional, and global levels.

As part of the implementation of UN Women's Corporate Evaluation Plan, the Independent Evaluation Service conducted this corporate evaluation to assess the relevance and adaptability of the Entity's responses to violence against women in the context of polycrisis, as well as the effectiveness of its efforts to leave no one behind. In light of the widespread pushback against women's human rights and gender equality, the evaluation also examined the coherence of UN Women's work with key partners and the sustainability of results to safeguard the gains achieved.

The evaluation found that UN Women's work is responsive to changing contexts and growing forms of violence, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and can further work to refine and or develop new guidance and tools for other contexts (e.g. in response to emerging areas such as technology-facilitated violence against women and girls). UN Women has also been effective in advancing norms and policies aligned to international human rights standards and in strengthening response to violence against women. The Entity has played a critical convening role, amplifying the voices of the women's movement and supporting women's rights organizations, particularly at the grassroots level. The evaluation found that UN Women's approach reflects an intersectional perspective aligned with the leave no one behind principle. However, challenges remain in scaling interventions linked in part to gaps in resourcing, and synthesising knowledge.

The evaluation calls for UN Women to further enhance corporate guidance, frameworks, and tools that can help adapt programming to persistent and emerging needs and to further build on and bolster support to social norms change on violence against women and girls at multiple levels. It also recommends continuing to support and mobilize other actors to support women's rights organisations, further build to scale successful pilot initiatives, and promote long-term, sustainable programming at the country level.

Ending violence against women and girls remains a core priority for UN Women. We hope this issue of Transform inspires continued collective action and commitment to creating a world where every woman and girl can live free from violence.

**Inga Kaplan**

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## **Think Beyond. Stay Ahead.**

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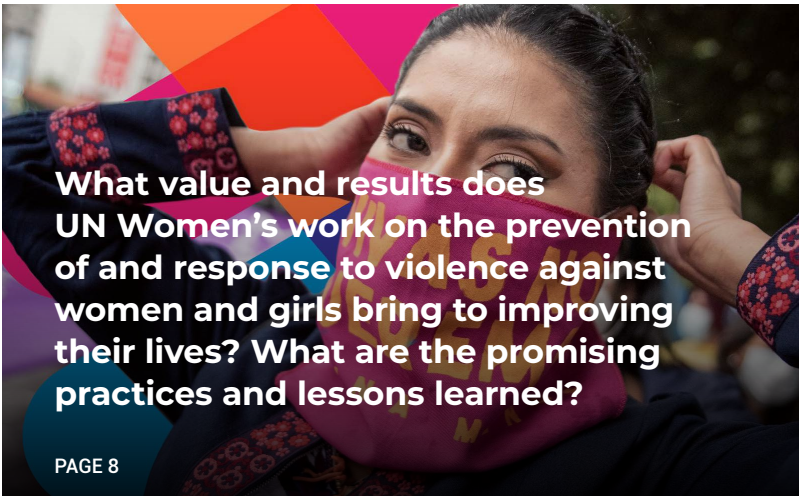
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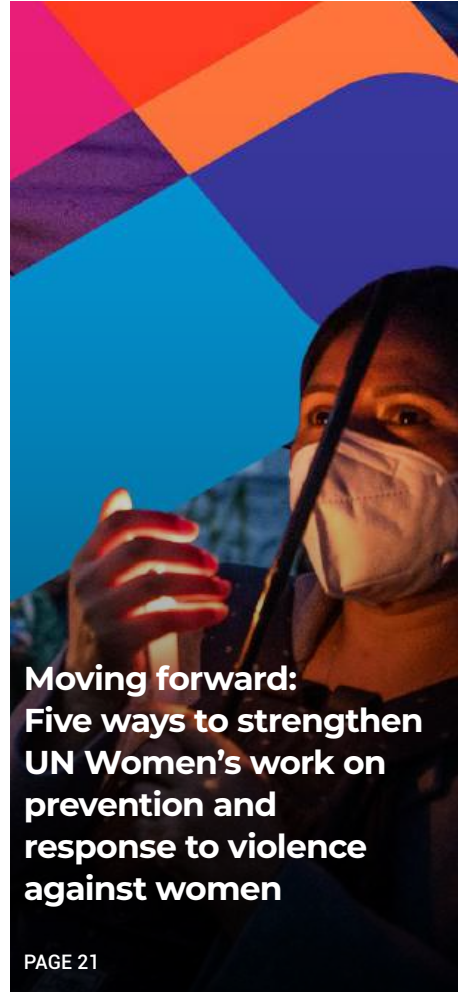
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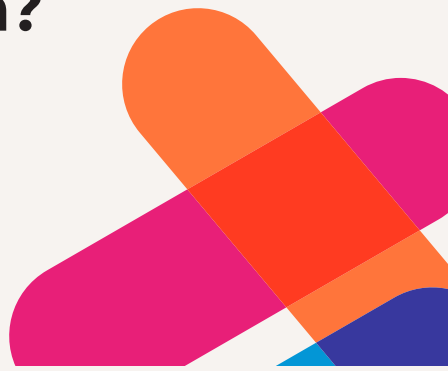
### ON THE COVER

Representatives of governments, civil society, the private sector, and the international community from across Europe and Central Asia gathered at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2022 roundtable.

Photo: UN Women / Antoine Tardy



# Why evaluate UN Women's support to the prevention and response to violence against women?



**Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most flagrant and pervasive human rights violations worldwide, undermining women's autonomy, enjoyment of basic rights and stunting progress towards gender equality. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and ensuing global crises such as acute food insecurity, climate change and growing armed conflicts are all contributing factors to the pervasiveness of VAW worldwide.**

In the aftermath of the pandemic, for those women and girls who have access to the internet, online violence has increased given the surge in internet use as daily activities for many continue to shift online.

The elimination of violence against women and girls (EVAWG) is one of UN Women's strategic priorities, as reflected in the Entity's previous and current Strategic Plans. The Entity supports Member States to enact or reform legislation and policies on VAWG in alignment with international standards and strengthens institutional capacities for their effective implementation. UN Women promotes social norms change to prevent VAWG through a variety of strategies informed from evidence. UN Women works to prevent VAWG through policy, advocacy and programmatic support to a wide range of stakeholders. This includes developing integrated frameworks to inform prevention programmes; supporting a whole of government approach; and supporting the development of evidence-based

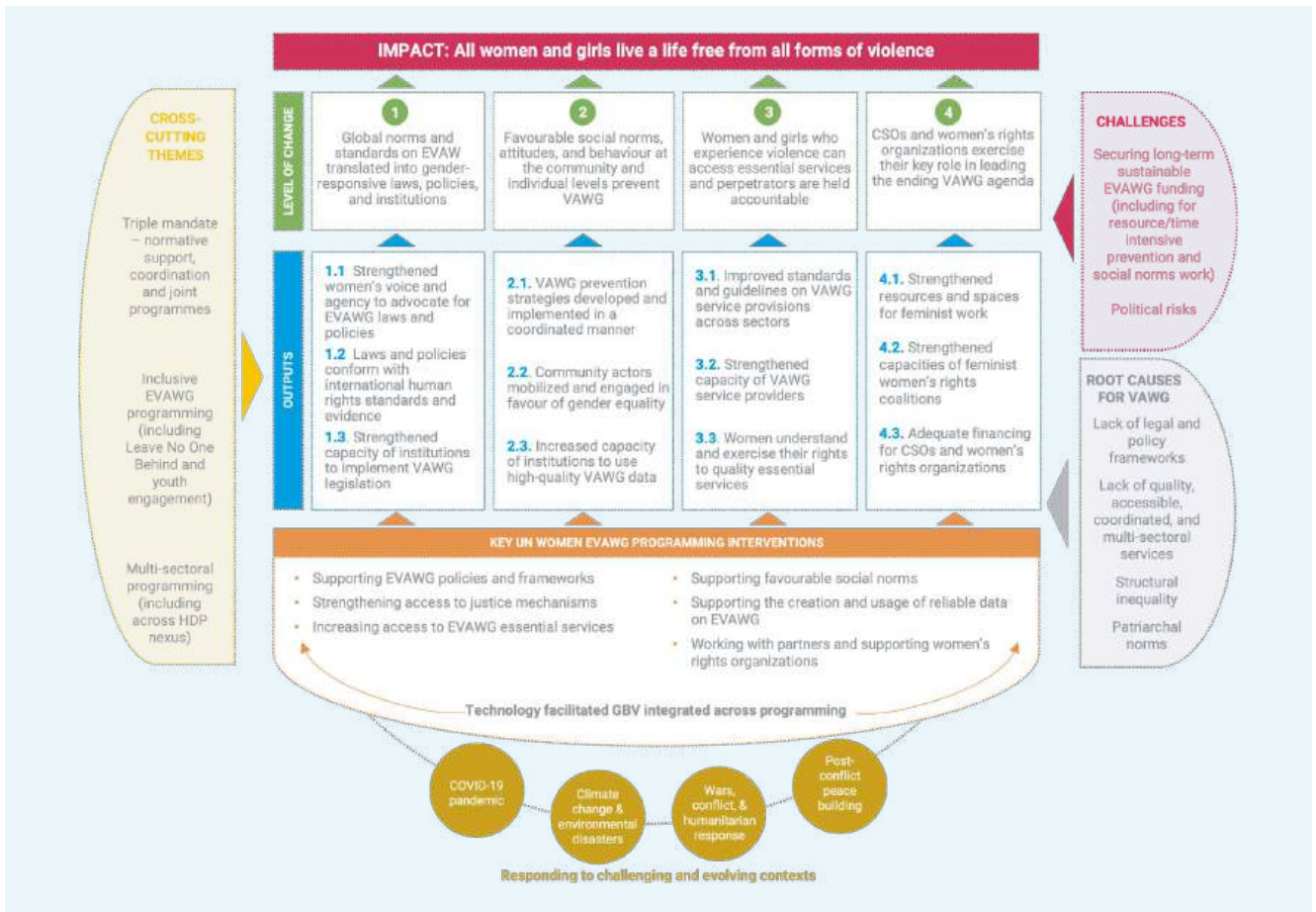
approaches through national action plans. UN Women's prevention work includes an emphasis in promoting positive masculinity and focusing on systems change, including for example by working with male-dominated sectors to integrate women's safety and gender equality across systems.

The Entity supports women's rights organizations (WROs) in their advocacy and monitoring of government commitments to end VAWG and their participation in comprehensive EVAWG prevention and response programming. UN Women supports access to quality services for women victims/survivors by strengthening multisectoral coordination of essential services, focusing on institutional change and building capacities of the judiciary, police and other key service providers. The Entity supports the incorporation of VAWG prevention and response in a broad range of laws, policies and programmes in different settings (urban, rural, humanitarian, online, etc.).

Key global programmes include, among others, the Joint Programme on Essential Services, the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Global Flagship Initiative and the European Union-funded Spotlight initiative. Most recently, in 2024, the global Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action (ACT) to End Violence Against Women global

initiative was launched. UN Women also manages the United Nations Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women, a system-wide mechanism that supports innovative approaches to address GBV globally. UN Women also enhances the collection and use of data on VAW for evidence-based decision-making and generates knowledge on the issue.

## ADAPTED THEORY OF CHANGE ON UN WOMEN'S EVAWG WORK



Source: Developed by the evaluation team





Photo: ©UN Women/Antoine Tardy

## Evaluation purpose and scope

The purpose of this independent corporate evaluation was to contribute to strategic decision-making, learning and accountability. In line with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee's evaluation criteria, the evaluation examined the relevance, effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of UN Women's support to strengthening VAWG prevention and response over the four-year period from June 2020 to June 2024.

The geographic scope of the evaluation covered UN Women's programming globally and across all six regions.

The domino effects of the current polycrisis have important implications for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 5 on Gender Equality. Therefore, the evaluation also examined the adaptability of UN Women's work on VAWG prevention and response in different operational contexts.

## KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS WERE:

1. To what extent has UN Women's work on VAWG prevention and response adapted to the needs and concerns of women, and to priority policy areas? (Relevance/Adaptability)
2. How effectively has UN Women's support contributed to VAWG prevention and response? (Effectiveness)
3. To what extent is UN Women's approach coherent with the work of other partners in this space (UN agencies and non-UN actors)? (Coherence)
4. In what ways are the principles of leave no one behind, human rights, including disability inclusion, and gender equality integrated in VAWG prevention and response? (Equity)
5. What is UN Women's approach to safeguarding gains and ensuring sustainability in this area of work? (Sustainability)

The evaluation included an assessment of results achieved under UN Women's previous (2018–2021) and current (2022–2025) Strategic Plans. Given the systemic outcomes approach of the current Strategic Plan, the evaluation was scoped to focus primarily on assessing contributions to systemic outcomes related to positive social norms and women's access to services, goods and resources. The analysis also explored links to systemic outcomes on women's leadership, policies and institutions.

To avoid overlap with concurrent evaluations and assessments, the Spotlight Initiative and the United Nations Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence Against Women were outside the scope of the evaluation. However the evaluation team reviewed and

incorporated evidence from relevant reports. The focus and coverage of the evaluation were informed by extensive stakeholder consultations, detailed portfolio reviews of UN Women's programmes and desk reviews of relevant evaluations and strategic documents.

The evaluation is intended for use primarily by the UN Women Executive Board, UN Women's senior management, UN Women's Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) section, UN Women Regional and Country Offices designing and implementing programming for the prevention and response to VAWG, in addition to other personnel and partners working on or with an interest in the issue.




# UN WOMEN'S EVALUATION HANDBOOK

How to manage gender-responsive evaluation  
(2022 Edition)



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**WHAT VALUE AND RESULTS DOES  
UN WOMEN'S WORK ON THE PREVENTION  
OF AND RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN AND GIRLS BRING TO IMPROVING  
THEIR LIVES? WHAT ARE THE PROMISING  
PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED?**



### CONCLUSION 1:

UN Women's EVAWG approach has been responsive to changing contexts and growing forms of violence. By leveraging established areas of work, the Entity was particularly agile in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. While some Country Offices working in development contexts were able to respond to other emerging crises and the increase in technology facilitated gender-based violence (TF GBV), there is scope to further strengthen and expand strategic guidance, frameworks and tools to support these areas of work. (Relevance/Adaptability, Coherence and Effectiveness)

As evidenced through regional and country case studies, UN Women's EVAWG approach was flexible in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in supporting existing government and WRO/CSO partners to continue with VAWG service provision throughout the pandemic; supporting the integration of VAWG considerations into government pandemic response plans at national and local levels; supporting partners to move activities online and shifting towards online stakeholder engagement; and advancing data/evidence generation and highlighting the shadow pandemic.

While in some regions and countries UN Women's EVAWG programming responded to climate and humanitarian/refugee crises to some extent, personnel at the country level indicated the need for strategic guidance and tools to work effectively across the HDP nexus. Commonly identified impediments in responding quickly to crises included the limited availability of immediate funding, constraints due to administrative processes and disparities in humanitarian expertise at the country level.

In the emerging area of TF GBV, UN Women's efforts at the global level have focused on advancing international norms and standards by informing intergovernmental policy processes and

outcomes. UN Women has contributed to knowledge generation on TF GBV, focusing on normative frameworks; safe technologies for supporting victims/survivors of violence; mapping of existing evidence; and methodological approaches for data collection at the global and subnational level to advance evidence-informed policy and programme action. At regional and national levels, the absence of normative frameworks to address TF GBV is a particular gap UN Women is working to address. In some case study countries, UN Women has taken initial steps with government partners to raise awareness around the importance of addressing this issue and to strengthen governments' capacity to work in this area. UN Women's overall approach has been to integrate TF GBV across its EAWW programming as it is conceived as part of the continuum of violence experienced by women and girls. While efforts have been made by headquarters to promote an Entity-wide exchange of information, the linkages between global, regional and country levels in this area are still being established.

## CONCLUSION 2:

UN Women's EVAWG work has been effective in advancing normative changes and strengthening the provision of survivor-centred services. Successful strategies included engagement of diverse coalitions of EVAWG actors (including multiple key line ministries); identifying strategic opportunities to strengthen implementation of laws; and focusing on women's access to justice. While various initiatives have supported VAWG prevention efforts, including through community mobilization, awareness-raising and piloting interventions in male-dominated sectors, work on social norms change for EVAWG needs to be strengthened. This includes strengthening strategies to engage men and boys to transform patriarchal masculinities at community and institutional levels. (Effectiveness, Coherence, Sustainability) (Relevance/Adaptability, Coherence and Effectiveness)

UN Women has successfully positioned itself and gained important trust and credibility in supporting partners with the establishment and implementation of VAWG laws, frameworks and policies at national, state and municipal levels. Its multi-pronged approach to engaging stakeholders (including across different key line ministries), supporting institutional capacity-building and strengthening referral/access to justice systems contributed to improving access to essential services among women and girls, including those in situations of vulnerability.

With respect to VAWG prevention work, most case study countries had successfully implemented and adapted the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Flagship Initiative model (focused on creating safe public spaces for women and girls in cities) to local contexts, with many countries expanding the model to spaces such as educational institutions, private-sector supply chains and other male-dominated sectors.

UN Women piloted some successful strategies and entry points to change social norms in the case study countries, including promoting community-level discussion and awareness-raising through media campaigns, participatory theatre, couples counselling and positive

parenting workshops, among others. While there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach for social norms work, there were limited efforts to replicate/exchange and contextualize some of the successful initiatives across different regions. A recent corporate evaluation on social norms change concluded there is a need for UN Women to clarify and strengthen its overall approach to social norms work. Similar challenges were noted in this evaluation, as UN Women's social norms work on EVAWG was seen to lack a clear implementation plan; a measure of what actual attitudinal and behavioural change means (not just reach); and sufficient funding to support the achievement of planned VAWG social norms results. In addition, the strategic focus on transforming patriarchal masculinities and the engagement of men and boys in changing social norms was found to need further strengthening.



## Illustrative examples of key vawg prevention and response results / outcomes and entry points

Development of WAWG laws, frameworks and policies	
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ UN Women worked across stakeholder groups to support the adoption of the new National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women in mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. UN Women also provided considerable technical support to the newly established Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Elders and Children in Zanzibar<sup>38</sup> to mainstream gender-transformative principles throughout its structure and to support it to lead inter-ministerial coordination on VAWG.</li> <li>➤ Since the inception and during the adoption of Fiji's National Action Plan, UN Women provided technical expertise, funding and facilitated multi-sector consultations. This helped to ensure a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Entry points/strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Multisectoral approach to engage stakeholders from across key line ministries, various government levels and stakeholder groups.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In West and Central Africa, UN Women's partnership with the Economic Community of West African States contributed to the development of a regional strategy to prevent and respond to VAW validated by national women's machineries and adopted by Heads of State.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Collaborating with regional organizations as equal partners to ensure local buy-in and alignment with regional priorities.</li> </ul>
Strengthened implementation of existing EVAWG laws	
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In Bolivia, UN Women supported the establishment of a municipalities network to facilitate the sharing of existing VAWG services across rural and urban municipalities located in geographically similar areas as part of efforts to support implementation of Law 348 that guarantees access to VAWG services to all women in Bolivia.</li> <li>➤ In India, UN Women supported implementation of the 2013 Prevention of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Act by providing capacity development and technical support to state and central government officials, and to certain private-sector partners.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Entry points/strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Leveraging existing government EVAWG funds and resources to implement laws and shift to local level work.</li> <li>* Expanding EVAWG work through cross-thematic collaboration, using workplace safety as an entry point to wider EVAWG work.</li> </ul>

<sup>38</sup> This ministry was newly established in 2022 and is responsible for leading the government's EVAWG work across Zanzibar.

Support to safe public spaces for women and girls	
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In most case study countries, UN Women implemented the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces model to prevent and address sexual harassment and create safe public spaces for women and girls. In several cases, these initiatives were expanded to other spaces such as universities, markets, technical institutes and transportation in Egypt, Tanzania and Viet Nam, as well as private-sector supply chains and workplaces in India.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Entry points/strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Localization of global frameworks and tools along with their adaptation to facilitate expansion in a variety of settings attentive to local contexts.</li> </ul>
Strengthened access to VAWG services	
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In Egypt, UN Women strengthened the psychosocial and legal capacities of the Women's Complaint Office, contributing to its expanded reach. The Entity also strengthened the capacities of shelters under the orbit of the Ministry of Social Solidarity, using a survivor-centred approach to increase safety, privacy and confidentiality.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Entry points/strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Integrating survivor-centred approaches in VAWG referral systems and services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In the Pacific region, UN Women collaborated with regional and national organizations to integrate gender and protection measures into disaster response and management. The Entity provided training on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; supported the Fiji Safety and Protection Cluster in developing preparedness plans; and strengthened capacity within the Kiribati National Protection Cluster and civil society groups in the Solomon Islands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Integrating EVAWG service protocols into emergency crisis response.</li> </ul>
Strengthened access to justice mechanisms	
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In Chile, as part of the Essential Services global programme, UN Women trained police to address human rights violations, particularly sexual violence committed by state agents, and is supporting a broader process of institutional gender mainstreaming within the two national police services.</li> <li>➤ In Tanzania, UN Women supported the development of a gender bench book to provide guidance to judges on how to effectively rule on VAWG cases in a standardized way and supported the provision of legal aid on VAWG to marginalized rural communities through mobile legal aid clinics.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Entry points/strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Direct engagement with the police and judicial systems, leveraging tools such as the Handbook on Gender-Responsive Police Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence.</li> </ul>
VAWG prevention efforts at the community level	
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In Egypt, CSOs supported by UN Women used strengthening parental abilities as an initial discussion theme to bring women and men together to eventually discuss family dynamics, including VAWG.</li> <li>➤ In Moldova, young couples were brought together to discuss positive inter-personal relationships, which served as an entry point to engage in dialogue around VAWG.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Entry points/strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Using community dialogues and widely accessible themes, such as parenting and positive relationships.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In Viet Nam, UN Women engaged with Men's Clubs to strengthen dissemination of information on shelters for VAWG survivors. In Dien Bien, a remote region with a relatively high incidence of VAWG, UN Women engaged with and provided capacity-building support to five men's clubs, including two clubs of ethnic men and one with the police.</li> <li>➤ In Fiji, UN Women engaged faith-based organizations and sports bodies in primary prevention efforts to promote social norms change within influential community structures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Mobilization of non-traditional actors in primary prevention efforts.</li> </ul>

Source: Developed by the evaluation team from primary data gathered through case studies



### CONCLUSION 3:

UN Women's EVAWG work included some cross-thematic approaches, particularly with Women's Economic Empowerment. However, synergies with other thematic areas were uneven in some cases and not consistently applied across all EVAWG areas of work. Efforts were hindered to some extent by the Entity's thematic structure and thematic funding modalities. (Effectiveness, Sustainability)

Efforts to create linkages between EVAWG and Women's Economic Empowerment were noted in several case study countries. However, cross-thematic collaboration was not consistently applied across UN Women's EVAWG work. Commonly identified barriers included UN Women's primarily thematic structure and focus on thematic funding models. Some strategies that facilitated cross-thematic collaboration included holding regular cross-office meetings to identify cross-thematic entry points; building

programming portfolios that integrate cross-thematic elements/outcomes (e.g. Safe Cities); leveraging linkages with diverse government ministries (including through coordination committees); implementing different thematic programmes within the same geographic space to promote cross-synergies; and strengthening Strategic Note and annual planning to identify common entry points and synergies across thematic areas.

**CONCLUSION 4:**

UN Women continues to play a pivotal role in advancing global norms, developing guidance documents and supporting programming and data frameworks related to VAWG prevention and response. Collaborating with various stakeholders, UN Women has advanced and tailored global frameworks and promoted more coordinated EVAWG initiatives at the country level. While joint programming and collaboration among UN agencies continue to be critical for developing comprehensive EVAWG initiatives, challenges with the coherence of internal systems and resource allocation persist.

(Coherence, Effectiveness)

UN Women has played a key role in shaping global EVAWG frameworks, such as the Essential Services package, the Handbook on Gender-Responsive Police Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence and the RESPECT framework. This has entailed working with a wide range of stakeholders to draw on global and national evidence and adapt frameworks to local contexts. UN Women has engaged with UN agencies (including UNOPS, ILO and the World Bank) to develop guidance and tools integrating EVAWG approaches into other thematic areas such as infrastructure, transport and climate action. UN Women has continued to leverage its knowledge and thought leadership through engagement in intergovernmental processes, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, among others, to highlight VAWG issues.

UN Women's engagement in joint programmes (particularly with UNODC, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO) at the country level has resulted in more comprehensive programmes addressing VAWG. At the same time, there remains room to expand UN Women's partnerships with a wider variety of UN agencies to help its EVAWG programming enter new spaces and address complex thematic issues. Success in implementing joint initiatives relies to a great extent on open communication and agencies' willingness to collaborate. Additional challenges, such as differences in reporting systems, disagreements over areas where mandates overlap and competition for resources remain. Despite these obstacles, resource partners favour funding more integrated approaches and joint programmes, indicating a strong demand for coordinated efforts.



## CONCLUSION 5:

UN Women plays a key role in strengthening WROs and CSOs, particularly by acting as a convener and amplifying voices from the women's movement. UN Women worked closely with these organizations in advocating for EVAWG laws and policies; participating in data collection/research; raising awareness and community mobilization to address social norms; building capacity for VAWG prevention and response; and other co-creation processes related to EVAWG programming. There is a need to better support smaller, community-based organizations, especially in challenging contexts, and further invest in movement building at national and grassroots levels. (Coherence, Effectiveness)

UN Women is widely recognized for its strong relationships with WROs, and its efforts to facilitate networking and amplify these organizations' voices at global, regional and national levels. However, stakeholders expressed a need for more convening, networking and advocacy opportunities, and increased support in diversifying funding sources, particularly as VAWG is one of the ways backlash against women's rights and gender equality occurs, and given the context of shrinking civic spaces in some countries. Support to WROs and movement building is critical to advance EVAWG prioritization across stakeholders, hold governments accountable and resist pushback. This is well reflected in UN Women's strategic

and programming documents, but evidence from the case study countries suggests that support to WROs and women's rights movement building requires further support at national and grassroots levels, including through a diversified donor base. Owing to changes in regulations, direct funding from UN Women to CSOs may no longer be feasible in some contexts. However, the Entity's role as a convener of diverse stakeholders remains highly valued. Stakeholders also perceived some constraints, due to internal policies and procedures, on the types of partners that could be engaged in different contexts. This issue was particularly highlighted in engagements with small, informal organizations and new types of partners.



## CONCLUSION 6:

UN Women's approach to EVAWG incorporates an intersectional lens, focusing on addressing intersecting forms of discrimination that various groups of women may experience, and which heighten their risk of experiencing violence. Key progress has been made in disability inclusion and outreach to rural women, though challenges remain in scaling interventions and strengthening knowledge exchange. There is also a need for more comprehensive guidance on addressing specific groups in situations of vulnerability, including those that are the most difficult to reach due to cultural sensitivities or other factors. (Equity)

UN Women's EVAWG frameworks and guidance documents and other knowledge products emphasize the importance of an intersectional approach and the leave no one behind principle in addressing VAWG prevention and response. UN Women implemented diverse, context-specific interventions to address the needs of women in situations of vulnerability. Disability inclusion was fairly consistently (though not universally) incorporated, reflecting corporate-level emphasis in this area of work and demonstrating the progress made in recent years. Successful initiatives to reach rural women were also seen across several case study countries. Areas for improvement include ensuring that leave no one behind approaches are scaled effectively across different regions and contexts, and the availability of data.



## CONCLUSION 7:

UN Women's efforts to embed sustainable programming elements into its EAWG work are likely to support and safeguard gains in some contexts. Successful strategies included institutional capacity-building and support to leveraging and expanding domestically available funding for VAWG prevention and response. However, reliance on relatively short-term funding in some countries is hindering the development of programming that is holistic and able to contribute towards sustainable change. (Sustainability, Coherence)

UN Women's EAWG programming has made concerted efforts to integrate sustainable programming elements to increase the likelihood of results enduring beyond project/programme completion. Particularly successful strategies included supporting normative change; building capacities within government/public institutions (e.g. shelters, police, etc.) to implement existing laws and the delivery of services; making use of existing government EAWG budgets/funding; and supporting the additional allocation of government funds towards EAWG work through gender-responsive budgeting. UN Women's reliance on funding models that are primarily donor driven and based on short-term projects limits the extent to which Country Offices can develop comprehensive EAWG strategies that lead to impact-level change. Although cumulative funding for EAWG within UN Women has increased during the current Strategic Plan period, more consistent, flexible and longer-term funding is required. This is particularly the case for social norms programming, which requires longer-term, consistent

investment. Building on successful fundraising through key programmes (such as the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, Essential Services Package and ACT), provides scope to leverage UN Women's collective voice and expertise in further support of country-level fundraising efforts. Through such global initiatives, UN Women was able to pilot country-level EAWG programming, which in some case study countries has subsequently expanded, been scaled-up and/or replicated. Securing funding for cross-thematic work and Strategic Note implementation appears to be a resource mobilization strategy that supports more holistic programming. However, work with the private sector to create violence-free workspaces has yet to translate into broader resource mobilization in support of EAWG programming. Finally, the global pushback against women's rights presents a threat to the sustainability of gains, underscoring the need to further invest in supporting WROs and movement building at multiple levels.



# LESSONS LEARNED AND PROMISING PRACTICES

## LESSON 1

### Importance of UN Women's ground-level presence when working with partners

The evaluation found that UN Women's ability to engage government partners and support CSOs was strongly facilitated by having a physical presence close to and with direct access to key partners. For instance, both UN Women personnel and government partners in Zanzibar explained that UN Women's ability to support the Zanzibar government was significantly strengthened once UN Women had created a dedicated office on the island of Zanzibar. By locating this office within the same building as the newly established Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Elders and Children, UN Women had more regular contact with and could support government partners, and these partners felt at ease to reach out to UN Women.

Government partners stated that UN Women's technical assistance and accessibility had been essential in facilitating the progress made on EVAWG by the ministry and its partners. Similarly, in India, state governments expressed a desire for UN Women to establish offices at the state level to better facilitate direct collaboration with and support to state government actors.

## LESSON 2

## Usefulness of and continued need for corporate guidance to support country-level initiatives

UN Women EVAWG personnel across case study countries stressed the importance and usefulness of corporate guidance, frameworks and tools to support country-level EVAWG initiatives. Examples of useful global frameworks and guidance used by Country Offices and adapted to local contexts included the Safe Cities model, the RESPECT framework, the Essential Services Package and the Gender Responsive Policing Manual. UN Women personnel at the country level also identified the need for corporate frameworks, guidance and tools to address

complex country-level challenges, such as more support for strategies to address social norms change, providing EVAWG prevention and response support across the HDP nexus, and strengthening support to hard to reach groups of women in situations of vulnerability. Without this guidance and support, Country Offices are left to develop their own approaches, requiring significant resources and a level of technical competence, which is not necessarily found at the country level across all UN Women programming countries.

## LESSON 3

## Opportunities to engage non-traditional partners through cross-thematic work

UN Women's EVAWG work in India demonstrated how collaborating with its Women's Economic Empowerment work can create opportunities to partner with non-traditional partners, such as actors from the private sector. UN Women supported the institutionalization of improved procedures in private-sector companies across multiple sectors and regions, with the aim of creating safe spaces and eliminating sexual harassment across private-sector supply chains. While

partnering with private-sector companies is still an emerging area for UN Women, using both EAW and Women's Economic Empowerment entry points to diversify the donor base in relation to support for VAWG prevention interventions (e.g. by strengthening women's access to employment, savings and credit) can help to establish effective partnerships with the private sector and further expand UN Women's EVAWG work into workplaces, including private-sector settings.

## LESSON 4

## Transforming patriarchal masculinities to end VAWG

UN Women's current Strategic Plan presents the engagement of men and boys as a strategy to advance its EVAWG work and to change social norms. However, the Entity has not developed comprehensive guidance in this area of work for gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women's Transforming Patriarchal Masculinities framework calls for a transformative approach, requiring deep, lasting changes not only in interpersonal gender relations within families and communities, but also in patriarchal institutions and the ideologies that sustain them. Currently, there is no dedicated

indicator within Strategic Plan reporting to measure changes among boys and men or changes in patriarchal masculinities. While guidance has been provided on comprehensive approaches to prevention (including evidence-based interventions shared in the RESPECT framework and its accompanying guidance), additional guidance is required within a more coherent overall approach to social norms change. This could include increased support to Country Offices working to implement strategies on the meaningful engagement of men and boys, and the transformation of patriarchal masculinities.

## LESSON 5

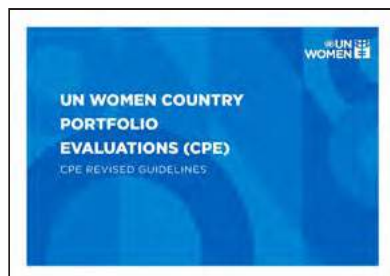
## Supporting CSOs and WROs within shrinking civic spaces

UN Women currently faces considerable challenges in providing direct financing to CSOs, WROs and community-based organizations due to increased government restrictions and a shrinking civil society space in many countries. Funding to smaller CSOs is also limited to some extent by the Entity's internal policies and procedures. Within this context, other types of support to CSOs become critical. There are opportunities for UN Women to further

leverage its convening role and comparative strengths to support CSOs through non-financial means (such as advocacy efforts and networking). Further support to CSOs and WROs is essential to safeguard EVAWG results and gains, as these organizations are key actors in holding governments accountable and continuing to push forward the EVAWG agenda, which is currently threatened by the global trend of increasing resistance to women's rights.

# UN WOMEN COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATIONS (CPE)

CPE REVISED GUIDELINES  
(2022 Edition)



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# MOVING FORWARD: FIVE WAYS TO STRENGTHEN UN WOMEN'S WORK ON PREVENTION AND RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The evaluation offers five recommendations that are critical for UN Women to strengthen its work on prevention and response to violence against women

## RECOMMENDATION 1

Continue to refine and roll out existing guidance, and develop further guidance, frameworks and tools to adapt and strengthen EVAWG programming in response to persistent and emerging priorities (e.g. across the HDP nexus and in response to growing TF GBV).



## RECOMMENDATION 2

Further enhance global, regional and country-level support to WROs and grassroots/smaller CSOs working on VAWG prevention and response, including through a diversified donor/partner base.



## RECOMMENDATION 3

Continue to roll out comprehensive frameworks on prevention and response that include a focus on social norms change at multiple levels and further refine and/or develop new tools/guidance to further support institutional norms change, including through multiple strategies to engage with men and boys.



## RECOMMENDATION 4

Strengthen and adapt approaches to foster more comprehensive and longer-term EVAWG programming at the country level.



## RECOMMENDATION 5

Building on UN Women's role as convener in the EVAWG space, continue to strengthen the multi-stakeholder approach and scale up successful pilot initiatives at the country level.



# PERSPECTIVES FROM MANAGEMENT

This following section was written based on UN Women's management response to this corporate evaluation.



UN Women welcomes the Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's approach to violence against women prevention response: Navigating changes in the context of global conflicts and emergencies, including during the COVID-19 pandemic and the global pushback on gender equality and women's human rights. The evaluation aimed to assess the adaptability and effectiveness of UN Women's work, including its efforts to address the needs of those most marginalized and at higher risk of experiencing violence against women, and examine the coherence of the Entity's work with that of other UN actors in this space and its efforts to ensure sustainability.

The evaluation provides valuable findings that will inform corporate programmatic thinking and practice on UN Women's work on violence against women and girls (VAWG) prevention and response, including in ongoing global VAWG programmes (e.g. Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Global

Initiative, Spotlight 2.0, Essential Services, VAW Data, ACT to End Violence against Women and Girls, initiatives on Prevention and addressing Technology facilitated Violence against Women and Girls (TF VAWG), Generation Equality and its corresponding Action Coalitions. It will also feed into the development of the next UN Women Strategic Plan (2026-2029) and strengthen the implementation of the Gender Equality Accelerator (GEA) on Ending Violence against Women and Girls (EVAWG).

UN Women appreciates the evaluation findings, that the Entity has been responsive to the challenges presented by the evolving landscape on EVAWG, including changing global contexts and emerging Forms of VAWG. In particular, the evaluation notes that the Entity was 'particularly agile in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic,' notably through its thought leadership, supporting government and

civil society partners' provision of essential support services for VAWG survivors online and offline; integrating VAWG

considerations into government pandemic response plans at national and local levels; the swift generation of data and evidence, as well as leading coordinated advocacy efforts highlighting the nature and extent of the 'shadow pandemic' in private and public spaces, and good practices and recommendations.

UN Women acknowledges the finding of the evaluation that the Entity is increasingly playing an important coordination and advisory role in supporting more gender responsive and inclusive UN-wide humanitarian responses and that several of its interventions in response to natural disaster and climate change. It recognizes that, to some extent, some EVAWG programmes in these contexts are relatively nascent, and that the Entity can strengthen its response in this area. UN Women agrees with the evaluation's recommendation that there is further scope to develop additional strategic guidance, frameworks and tools to effectively support its work across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP) nexus, and to integrate emerging forms of violence, such as TF VAWG, across its EVAW programming, as TF VAWG is considered part of the online/offline continuum of violence experienced by women and girls.

At the same time, UN-Women has achieved a number of successful results in community mobilization, awareness raising and piloting of interventions in sports, media, male-dominated sectors in comprehensive prevention initiatives. The entity has leveraged its UN coordination function and collaborative action at the global level to advance international norms and standards through informing intergovernmental policy processes and outcomes, and to address the absence of normative frameworks addressing TF VAWG at regional and country levels. It has also advanced normative changes and strengthening the provision of survivor-centred services, including for women and girls in vulnerable situations.

The evaluation recognizes UN Women's strategic and multi-pronged approach involving strengthening development and implementation of laws addressing VAWG, supporting institutional capacity building and strengthening women's and girls' referral and access to justice systems, all of which have contributed to improving their overall access to a range of multisectoral services. The evaluation

recognizes UN Women's long-standing relationship with women's and civil society organizations. UN Women acknowledges a finding of the evaluation regarding its established strong constituencies with national women's machinery, women's rights and civil society organizations as a result of its history of engagement and advocacy for a human rights based, woman and survivor-centred and multisectoral approach to EVAWG, and acknowledges the need for further convening and networking opportunities, particularly in contexts where the civic space for these organizations is shrinking. Through initiatives such as the ACT to End Violence against Women Programme, UN Women is further consolidating its strategic partnership with women's rights and civil society organizations through new alliances at the global and regional level to facilitate movement strengthening, multi-sectoral coalition building and shared advocacy agendas to amplify the voices of women's rights movements. UN Women also continues to complement its efforts in addressing this need for further conveying and networking with UN and

other partners at all levels, alongside the UNTF2 to End Violence against Women, and through programmes such as Spotlight 2.0.

UN Women acknowledges the finding that its EVAWG programming has made concerted efforts to integrate sustainable programming elements to increase the sustainability of results beyond the end of a programme. Successful strategies implemented through global initiatives such as the Essential Services and the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Global Initiative have included supporting normative change, institutional capacity strengthening and supporting the additional allocation of government funds towards EVAWG work, including through gender-responsive budgeting.

UN Women recognizes that more consistent, flexible and longer-term funding, especially for grassroots women's rights organizations, is required to ensure EVAWG initiatives are sustained and result in impact level change.



# EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology consisted of a mixed-methods design and theory-based approach, building on a reconstructed theory of change. The evaluation team employed a combination of qualitative content analysis, quantitative descriptive statistics and contribution analysis to facilitate a summative assessment of UN Women's contributions towards outcome and impact-level results. The evaluation was learning-focused and allowed for open-ended questions/lessons to facilitate a forward-looking assessment to inform UN Women's current and upcoming Strategic Plan (2026–2029).

The evaluation team undertook primary and secondary data collection through semi-structured interviews and in-depth desk reviews at the global level, and through eight country and regional programme case studies. The case studies included a combination of in-person and virtual data collection in Bolivia, Egypt, India, Tanzania, Viet Nam and regional EVAWG programmes in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and West and Central Africa. The evaluation team undertook an overall portfolio review and programme reviews of key global EVAWG initiatives, including the Essential Services Package, Prevention Frameworks and Initiatives; the Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces with Women and Girls Flagship Initiative; and the ACT programme. The evaluation team also conducted two online surveys fielded to relevant internal stakeholders and external partners at global, regional and country levels.

In total, 326 stakeholders (82 per cent female, 17 per cent male and 1 per cent prefer not to say) were consulted as part of the evaluation; 172 stakeholders (83 per cent female, 17 per cent male) were engaged through semi-structured interviews (key informant interviews and focus group discussions); and the online surveys received 154 responses (30 per cent internal response rate, 46 per cent external response rate). Consulted stakeholders included key UN Women personnel working on EVAWG and other thematic areas, government partners, Member States and donors, civil society organizations (CSOs) and WROs, other partners such as those from academia and the private sector, and UN agencies in the EVAWG space.

The evaluation incorporated a gender-responsive and human rights-based approach that aligned with the UN Women Evaluation Policy and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards. The evaluation adhered to UNEG guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation, UNEG Ethical Guidelines, UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system and UNEG guidance on integrating disability inclusion in evaluation. The evaluation also drew on feminist evaluation principles which, inter alia, encourage wide stakeholder engagement and facilitate the evaluation as a valuable process in and of itself to empower stakeholders to reflect on and engage with UN Women's EVAWG work.

## Sources and Methodology for data collection

### Mixed method data



Primary qualitative and quantitative data was collected and triangulated  
Secondary data sources include:  
Quantum, Transparency portal, DAMS

### 172 stakeholder interviews



Semi-structured interviews and  
focus group discussions  
(N = 142 female, 30 male)

### 300+ documents reviewed



Desk review, synthesis and portfolio  
analysis of annual workplans,  
Strategic Notes, evaluations, project  
and programme documents, etc.

### 8 case studies



**5 country case studies:** Bolivia, Egypt,  
India, Tanzania and Viet Nam;  
**3 regional programmes in:** Asia and  
the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia,  
and West and Central Africa

### 2 online surveys, 154 respondents



UN Women personnel  
(N = 48; 30% response rate)  
UN Women partners  
(N = 106; 46% response rate)

### 4 IES country visits



Members of the IES evaluation team  
led country visits to gather data and  
insights from UN Women personnel  
and external stakeholders in Bolivia,  
India, Tanzania and Viet Nam.

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