



in partnership with



Joint Evaluation on Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the UN System

Joint informal Executive Board Meeting
May 2014
New York, NY

Marco Segone
Director, UN Women independent Evaluation Office

A context of transformation and change

- Gender equality at the forefront of the global development agenda
- UN accountability mechanisms for gender gathering pace
- UN coherence gaining momentum

What is a joint UN gender programme?

- Joint UN Programme: *'Improved efficiencies and synergies, leading to greater effectiveness and enhanced development results.'*
- Joint UN gender programme (JGP): *'A Joint Programme with an explicit objective of empowering women and/or promoting gender equality'*

- Commissioned to address a gap in evaluative evidence on country-level JGPs
- Unit of analysis is JGPs in the UN system, operating at country level; across a range of thematic areas and designed/implemented post 2006 and with budget over US\$100,000
- Conducted: May 2012 – November 2013
- Primary users are UN agencies, UNDG, donor/partner countries, civil society, particularly women's advocacy groups or gender related networks

Evaluation objectives were to assess:

- *overall contribution of JGPs to national development results on gender equality, including intended and unintended results and efficiency in achieving their objectives;*
- *The extent to which JGP's objectives and results are relevant to national and UN development goals and policies;*
- *The overall sustainability of JGP's results, including the level of national ownership, national capacity development, and partnerships between the UN system and national partners;*
- *The extent to which JGP have created synergies between and among UN agencies and partners at national level;*
- *The overall level of integration of human rights based approaches.*

Evaluation Management Group

Conducted by an external independent evaluation team

Evaluation Steering Committee

Evaluation Reference Group

National Evaluation Reference Groups

- In- depth desk review/interviews of a sample of 24 JGPs (out of 80) and web-based survey
- Field study of 5 JGPs : Albania, Kenya, Liberia, Nicaragua, State of Palestine; deepened analysis/interviews in Nepal
- Over 150 interviews with UN staff, donors, and national partners (governments and CSOs) at HQ and country level
- Main limitations were limited information on results and availability of data for comparative analysis

- Relevance
- Ownership and accountability;
- Coherence, synergies and efficiencies;
- Sustainable results;
- Added value

- JGPs have commonly demonstrated relevance and alignment with normative frameworks and national needs.
- Improving their responsiveness to national priorities and implementation of the human rights based approach is essential for broadening and deepening their relevance.
- A stronger analytical base is needed for design and principle of inclusion requires strengthening.

- JGPs recognized the importance of ownership and successfully featured initiatives for its facilitation. However, inclusion of explicit and overarching strategies for ownership that are broad-based and reflect a core role for women's representatives is still needed.
- Clear and coherent oversight and performance management strategies were not consistently used, with evaluation often representing a missed stage.
- The focus of accountability needs to shift from upwards (to UN Headquarters and donors) to accountability at the country-level by focusing on mutual accountability (to national stakeholders and the UN Country Team) and downward accountability to rights-holders.
- National governments have not demanded accountability from the UN.

- While JGPs operating in conducive environments have demonstrated coherence, other JGPs have generally been affected by weak drivers for coherence and have also faced a number of barriers to coherence
- UN Women's role needs clarification, and it is dependent on respective openness to engagement by other entities, rather than a systematized process.
- Improved synergies found, but efficiencies have not increased as expected
- “Cost of coordination” perceived as an investment; potential efficiency of JGPs considered high

- **Evidence of results in the area of**
 - thematic results for rights-holders
 - reforming and/or strengthening the policy, legislative and accountability environments for gender
 - Strengthening the demand side for reform
- **Evidence shows that strategies for sustainability have been put in place, but resilience of results can improve**

- Creating shared understandings of, partnerships for, and a common discourse around, gender equality
- Increasing the visibility and legitimacy of gender issues on the national agenda;
- Improving upstream results on policy reform and advocacy;
- Expanding the opportunity for translating normative gender work into operational initiatives
- Building outreach and synergies on gender issues
- Permitting a more multi-dimensional approach to addressing gender inequality.

- DaO environments, where appropriately leveraged, can provide a conducive setting for JGPs
- Successful implementation and the delivery of results within JGPs is strongly connected to a robust analytical basis
- A detailed and inclusive design process is the cornerstone for operational coherence
- Ownership and sustainability are not maximised where accountability is not grounded within the national context
- Realism is essential when seeking coordination and coherence across individual UN agencies with their own diverse systems and ways of operating;

- Demonstrated relevance and alignment with normative frameworks and national needs
- Recognized the importance of ownership and successfully featured initiatives for its facilitation
- Achieved normative and corresponding operational results
- Put in place strategies for sustainability
- Demonstrated their added value as a development cooperation modality for the UN at country-level
- Generated valuable lessons and promising practices to improve the next generation of JGPs

- JGPs modality should be a strategic choice, and not a default option
- Design process (analysis and inclusion)
- Coherence and efficiency
- Ownership and accountability

JGPs remain an accepted and integral part of the development cooperation landscape.

There are potentially actionable steps which all JGPs should take if their potential is to be fully realized for contributing to transformational change and results on gender equality

To UN agencies: *Ensure a clear strategic rationale for JGPs - and firmly ground designs in development effectiveness efforts at country level*

- Make the decision on a joint gender programme a strategic choice rather than a default reaction to funding incentives, UN reform or donor pressure.
- Increase the rigour of the design phase and center within a full risk framework from the outset
- The role of UN Women whose mandate positions them, where conditions permit, as a logical technical and/or co-ordination lead, should be clarified and made explicit within JGPs;
- Ensure that key principles of development effectiveness (alignment, accountability, ownership, harmonisation and managing for results) are embedded into designs and implementation.
- JGPs should be positioned as an opportunity to develop comprehensive national capacity development strategies for GEEW

To host governments and citizens: Ensure full ownership of, and accountability for, JGPs, as part of wider strategy and capacity development for gender

- Locate United Nations joint gender programmes as part of clear national strategies for gender equality;
- Adopt stronger leadership, and a more assertive stance, towards United Nations joint gender programmes in terms of their design, management and implementation, and reporting;
- Demand full accountability as a condition of implementation of a joint gender programme, and be vigilant in sustaining oversight.

To donors: *Accompany demands for rigour and results in JGPs with supportive guidance and a partnership-oriented approach*

- Raise the technical bar for joint gender programmes' design and implementation, as a condition of funding;
- Match demands with supportive guidance to United Nations entities on the joint modality;
- Permit flexibility of approach where justified, and particularly in response to contextual change;
- Demand results reporting which is geared to national strategies and results and include a focus on capacity development results for gender equality.

To the UN Development Group: *Provide more specific guidance on JGPs whilst advocating for systemic change*

- Develop and refine current guidance on when, how and under what conditions to use a joint gender programme modality;
- Continue to advocate for:
 - A revised United Nations business model;
 - The removal of systemic barriers and greater harmonization of the procedures which currently impede coordination and mitigate against the delivery of results on the ground;
- The creation of incentives for the application of the joint modality in gender programming.

Thank you very much for your attention