ODI

Evaluation of UN Women's Contribution to Increasing Women's Leadership and Participation in Peace and Security and Humanitarian Response

Afghanistan case study

Ashley Jackson

Acronyms

ANDS	Afghan National Development Strategy
APRP	Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme
AWN	Afghan Women's Network
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
EPD	Equality for Peace and Democracy
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women
EVAW SF	Afghanistan Elimination of Violence against Women Special Fund
GBV	Gender-based Violence
HPC	High Peace Council
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MP	Members of Parliament
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPWA	National Action Plan on Women in Afghanistan
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RCWP	Resource Centre for Women in Parliament
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organization
WPB	Women as Peacebuilders
WPG	Women, Peace and Governance

1. Introduction

Fieldwork for this case study was conducted in Kabul (Afghanistan) from 5-15 February 2013. Preparatory work and consultations were conducted prior to fieldwork, and several interviews that were not scheduled during the consultant's time in Afghanistan were conducted by phone or online subsequent to the field travel. This case study examined the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women's (UN Women) peace and security work, but also looked more broadly into areas of its portfolio which concerned aspects of violence against women (VAW) and governance work relevant to the peace and security agenda. In relation to the examination of UN Women's peace and security work, the case study also examined related operational and capacity issues as they arose and in agreement with the evaluation matrix areas of inquiry. The objective of the case study was to contribute to a wider assessment of UN Women's work in these areas, and assess how it supported women's leadership and participation in contexts of fragility or conflict.

2. Methodology

Fieldwork was carried out by a member of the evaluation team in collaboration with a local researcher which contributed to ensuring triangulation, knowledge of the socio-political context and better coverage of the data.

During the fieldwork country-level strategy and programming with a focus on the peace, security and humanitarian response agenda were examined. More detailed observations of country office work in this area involved looking at a selection of interventions, which were decided with the country office and in consultation with the evaluation team leader.

Qualitative analysis which drew on a combination of documentary evidence provided by the country office, and other stakeholders and interviews was used during the fieldwork. The fieldwork ensured that the range of relevant stakeholders identified in the inception phase, and with the country office, were interviewed. Interviews were semi-structured to address the concrete evaluation questions, but also allowed for unstructured questions as appropriate for the interview, context and intervention/activity under observation. Interviews included both focus group and one-to-one interviews.

In line with the guidelines set out in the handbook by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), the country case evaluation team took measures to ensure the inclusion and participation of relevant stakeholders, taking care to identify issues of power relations. The context analysis and the stakeholder mapping that was developed took account of the context-specific balance of power between relevant groups. During the fieldwork, the team was mindful of the relationship between implementers and different stakeholders in interventions, and the role of the evaluation team.

Programmatic interventions were selected based on their relevance to the following key criteria:

- Geographical spread and key features of country contexts;
- Thematic focus (to ensure spread across the thematic categories considered relevant for peace and security and humanitarian response);
- Type of interventions; and
- Other practical considerations, such as length of programme interventions, data availability, interest expressed in the evaluation by the country office, timing for the case study and team country expertise.

On this base, two interventions were selected: Women as Peacebuilders (WPB) and the Afghanistan Elimination of Violence Against Women Special Fund (EVAW SF). WPB was selected because of the length of the programme, the types of interventions (in large part, but not exclusively, focused on advocacy and capacity-building) and the nature of partnerships (focused on government and civil society, as well as the direct link between programming and the women, peace and security agenda). The EVAW SF was also selected for the length of the programme, as well as the nature of its programming. The general nature VAW and the lack of adequate response systems were, and continue to be, linked to the conflict (although not explicitly). Other linking factors included the social fabric and the limited capacity and resources of national partners to prevent and respond to VAW. Whether they could considered as humanitarian response, as opposed to risk mitigation interventions, is a complicated question. However, emergency response mechanisms such as those supported by the EVAW SF, in a situation of endemic violence, are often indeed life-saving. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has consistently included VAW and similar programming for conflict-affected populations, as well as improving services for non-conflict affected populations, in its annual humanitarian appeals (OCHA, 2010; 2011; 2012a; 2013). The key focus in the examination of case studies was not to evaluate overall effectiveness, but rather to determine whether UN Women's policy influence, programming and operations reflected an appropriate fit to context conditions, needs and realities.

3.   Country context

Afghanistan has been plagued by war and instability for the past three decades. From political upheaval that began in the late 1970s, Afghanistan descended into a pattern of conflict and chaos which has continued through to the present. On 7 October 2001, coalition troops were deployed to Afghanistan under the United States-led Operation Enduring Freedom. In December 2001, following the rapid fall of the Taliban government, a number of prominent Afghans met under the auspices of the United Nations in Bonn to form an interim government, the Afghan Interim Authority (AIA). The AIA had a six-month mandate which was followed by a two-year Transitional Authority and elections in 2004. The Bonn agreement also recommended the deployment of a United Nations-mandated international force to maintain security. On 22 December 2001, United Nations Security Council resolution 1386 authorized the creation and deployment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter to 'assist the Afghan Interim Authority in the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas'. The first troops under ISAF command were deployed in June 2002. After the fall of the Taliban government, diplomatic and aid agency presence (which had been extremely limited under the Taliban) dramatically increased to address humanitarian needs and begin post-war reconstruction efforts. On 28 March 2002, resolution 1401 established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to support 'focused recovery and reconstruction'. While there was relative stability following the collapse of the Taliban in 2001, security has remained fragile, and 2011 was marked a significant deterioration which affected all international actors, particularly the United Nations. Government control is tenuous in many areas of the country with the drawdown of ISAF combat troops continuing for the 2014 final deadline. Presidential, provincial and parliamentary elections are scheduled for 2014-2015, and will mark the end of the Karzai period of government. It is not clear what impact these factors will have on the country.

Governance

Afghanistan has historically lacked democratic institutions. At the national level, there is a parliament, a bi-cameral structure comprised of the *Meshrano Jirga* (the Upper House) and the *Wolesi Jirga* (the Lower House). At provincial level, governors are appointed and Provincial Councils are elected every four years. The development of political parties has been slow, especially those that can be considered pan-ethnic, and the composition of voting blocs in recent elections has largely fallen along ethnic lines. Government institutions at the subnational level remain weak and disconnected from the central government.

Presidential and Provincial Council elections were last held in 2009, while parliamentary elections were held in 2010. Although both elections were marred by widespread violence and fraud, urgently needed reforms to the electoral process and law (particularly the Independent Electoral Commission) have been slow-moving (Boone, 2010). The next round of Presidential and Provincial elections will be held in 2014, prior to the end of the security transition, while parliamentary elections are due to be held in 2015, following the end of the formal security transition process. Hamid Karzai, who has held power since 2002, is no longer eligible to run in the election and 2014 will be the first post-Taliban presidential election in which he will not stand.

Peace and security

Afghanistan's development continues to progress within a climate of heightened political instability and attacks by insurgents. The withdrawal of the NATO-led ISAF in 2014, which coincides with the next Presidential elections, has resulted in renewed fears of a larger conflict in the country or, as a compromise, power-sharing and growing social influence by conservative elements, including the Taliban. While the country was initially relatively secure following the fall of the Taliban, security began to markedly deteriorate in 2006. Armed conflict continues, with vast swathes of the country contested or beyond government control. The past two years have witnessed increasingly complex attacks launched by insurgents nationwide, and the continued targeting of government officials and activists. Internal displacement is increasing and civilian casualties from the conflict remain significant, with 7,559 civilian casualties recorded by the United Nations in 2012 (UNAMA Human Rights/ OHCHR, 2012).

Progress towards a political settlement remains a challenge in the absence of an active peace process. A High Peace Council (HPC) appointed by President Karzai in September 2010 to facilitate peace talks and lead national reconciliation has experienced major setbacks due to ongoing violence in various parts of the country and attacks against the Council's members. The Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme (APRP) was created in 2010 in an attempt to reintegrate mid- and low-level fighters through financial incentives and training, but progress has fallen short of expectations (Derksen, 2011).

Nonetheless, ISAF troop-contributing countries have pledged to withdraw from combat roles and hand over lead responsibility for security by the end of 2014. The transition process is currently underway, with responsibility for security in nearly half of the country already handed over to Afghan security forces. In light of the drawdown of combat troops, the international community, including the United Nations system, donors and other international actors, is currently in the process of defining its role in support of the Afghan government and national partners. The uncertainty of transition has also translated into uncertainty for many of the humanitarian and development organizations presently in Afghanistan regarding what kinds of programming and support they will be able to implement and the extent of geographic access (IRN, 2012).

Women and conflict

Long-lasting conflict and upheaval have exacted a heavy toll on women and girls in Afghanistan. During the war with the Soviet Union and the subsequent civil war in the 1980s and 1990s, women faced significant hardships. Abduction of women, sexual violence and forced marriages markedly increased during the civil war. Rape of women and girls appears to have been condoned by militia leaders as a weapon of war, to further terrorise civilians as well as a way of 'rewarding' fighters. Many women fled during the conflict, often with their families, predominantly to Pakistan and Iran. However, in Pakistan in particular, women were often confined to domestic spaces and, especially for those from urban areas, faced greater restrictions than were placed upon them in Afghanistan (Khan, 2002). Access to healthcare, education and paid work is extremely limited, with most refugees living in abject poverty (Turton and Marsden, 2002).

Under Taliban rule, women and girls were subject to a strict set of rules based on an extremist interpretation of Shari'a law. Education for girls was all but abolished. Women were banned from work, aside from female health workers, and were not allowed to leave home without a male escort and a full-length *burqa*. The wars left tens of thousands of female-headed families, yet they were subject to the same laws and many were reliant on assistance from international agencies or reduced to begging on the streets. Access to healthcare facilities was also extremely limited: in Kabul, one poorly equipped, barely functioning hospital was open to the half-million women in the city; 87 per cent of women in Kabul reported decreased access to health services; 81 per cent reported a decline in their mental condition; and 42 per cent met the conditions for post-traumatic stress disorder (Physicians for Human Rights, 1998).

While many women and girls enjoyed relative security and renewed freedoms after the fall of the Taliban, restrictions on female mobility and denial of their rights to work, inheritance and land ownership, and pervasive violence against women and girls pose serious threats to women's realisation of their human potential. While reliable, up-to-date statistics still remain a challenge in Afghanistan, women are being increasingly caught up in the violence. While civilian casualties decreased a little in 2012, for the first time since 2006, the number of female victims increased by 20 per cent (UNAMA Human Rights/OHCHR, 2012b). The resurgence of the Taliban in many areas of the country has led to women and girls being increasingly subjected to threats and attacks for participating in public life or attending school. In the province of Laghman, two successive directors of the Department of Women's Affairs office were assassinated within the space of a year (Tolo News, 2012).

Gender relations

During the past decade, significant gains have been made for and by women and girls in Afghanistan. More girls are in school now than ever before in the country's history and more than a quarter of Afghanistan's parliamentarians are female. The Constitution grants equal rights to men and women and Afghanistan is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The first combined initial and second periodic report was finalised and submitted to the CEDAW Committee in June 2011, and was scheduled to be reviewed in July 2013. The legal and policy framework protecting and empowering women has also expanded in recent years. The Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) includes gender as one of its cross-cutting themes. Other key policies and legal developments include the establishment of a National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) in 2007 (officially launched by President Karzai in 2009).

UN Women was instrumental in the development process[15] and the EVAW law, passed by presidential decree as a legal landmark, in 2009.

Yet such gains are limited, and the status of Afghan women remains amongst the lowest in the world, ranked 175 of 186 countries in the United Nations' 2012 Gender Inequality Index.[16] Afghanistan is a deeply conservative society, where female participation in public life has traditionally been extremely limited. Incremental progress on national policies and within Afghan institutions has often been achieved only after significant external pressure and amidst considerable internal obstacles, including lack of capacity, poor coordination and limited national and little internal political will. NAPWA has largely been unimplemented and the EVAW law remains largely unenforced (ActionAid, 2012; UNAMA Human Rights/OHCHR, 2011); 87 per cent of women report experiencing at least one form of domestic violence[17] and women who participate in public life do so at significant risk (UNAMA Human Rights/OHCHR, 2009; Crilly, 2012). Women have campaigned amidst threat and intimidation to gain their parliamentary seats and other elected positions (Nelson, 2009).

Women's economic activities, although a significant contributor to local economies through such activities as carpet-weaving and post-harvest processing, are rarely remunerated at fair market prices. Production and marketing are generally done with the support of a middleman, with women often not receiving equitable remuneration and with little recourse. Equally constraining has been the exclusion of women from local decision-making bodies (*shuras* and *jirgas*), although the inclusion of women on Community Development Councils through the National Solidarity Programme has helped remedy this exclusion in some instances at the village level (Beath et al.,2012).

There are worrying signs that the modest advances made after the fall of the Taliban are receding. Many Afghan and international human rights activists worry that this progress will be quickly erased once international troops leave (Abi-Habib, 2013). The government's increasingly conservative stance on the role of women is another cause of concern, including President Karzai's recent public statement in support of the Ulema Council which instructed women not to travel unchaperoned or mix with men in education or work (Vogt, 2012). There has also reportedly been a sharp rise in violent attacks on women in Afghanistan over the past year, particularly an increase in so-called 'honour killings' (Harooni, 2012). Many women are increasingly worried about their own security, and the implications of any political settlement on their rights and safety.

Aid environment

Since 2001, donors have given over $30 billion[18] in development and humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, and the volume of aid has risen each year since 2001 – making Afghanistan the largest recipient of overseas development assistance in the world. Assistance has undoubtedly improved life for Afghans and built the capacity of Afghan institutions. In 2001, under the Taliban, less than one million children attended school, almost none of them girls. Today, over five million children attend school, more than a third of whom are girls, and women comprise one in four of Afghanistan's teachers. The Basic Package of Health Services, a national programme managed by the Ministry of Health and implemented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has expanded health coverage significantly. Mortality

---

[15] Gender Review Report Royal Norwegian Embassy Afghanistan.
[16] See United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Human Development Indicators, GII: Gender Inequality Index. Available from http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/68606.html.
[17] Further information on the UN Women website. Available from http://www.unifem.org/worldwide/asia_pacific/.
[18] Unless otherwise indicated, currency refers to United States dollar.

rates for children under five have fallen by 40 per cent and infant mortality has decreased by 30 per cent (World Bank, n.d.). More than one in three pregnant women receive antenatal care, compared to just 16 per cent in 2003. Economic growth has been strong, if uneven and largely driven by aid, although the impact this has had on alleviating poverty is unclear.

Progress is however limited and fragile. Afghanistan remains one of the least developed countries and is among the ten poorest countries in the world as per the 2012 Human Development Report. An estimated 42 per cent of the population live on less than $1 a day, 68 per cent have no sustained access to improved water sources and almost 95 per cent are without access to improved sanitation. Despite success in expanding healthcare, an estimated 5.4 million Afghans lack access to health services, 4.4 million of whom are female (OCHA, 2012b). An estimated nine million Afghans (nearly a third of the population) live in poverty (World Bank, n.d.). Afghanistan also experienced its eighth drought in 11 years in 2011. There are also significant concerns about aid waste and corruption. Afghanistan ranks 174 out of 176 countries on Transparency International's 2012 Corruption Perception Index, compared to 117 out of 158 countries in 2005.[19]

Key stakeholders, partners and donors

UN Women, and UNIFEM before it, partners with the Afghan government historically focused on the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), although it has sought to build partnerships with other key ministries including the Ministries of Justice, Public Health, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Hajj and Religious Affairs, Labour and Social Affairs, and Information and Culture. Key donors include the Nordic countries (Finland, Norway and Sweden), as well as Belgium, France, Italy, Iceland, Japan and the Netherlands. Within the United Nations, UN Women has close programmatic relationships with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), and reports efforts to coordinate regularly with UNDP to avoid duplication of initiatives. Specifically on peace and security work, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) is a new but important partner on issues related to United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, as well as the Ministry of Interior (MoI). UN Women has developed key relationships within the United Nations system, including with UNAMA (both with the Human Rights Unit and the UNAMA Gender Unit) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and coordinates with others through its chairing of the United Nations country team (UNCT) Gender Working Group. It was noted by other stakeholders that coordination could be strengthened. UN Women also works with a wide range of civil society organizations (CSOs) to support and build their capacity. These include implementing partners for programming as well as advocacy and research, and other strategic partnerships.

The EVAW SF works (predominantly though not exclusively) with Afghan NGOs present in provinces across the country. In its peace and security work, UN Women works with some implementing partners to conduct advocacy and awareness-raising (most prominently Equality for Peace and Democracy [EPD]). In terms of advocacy and political participation more generally, the Afghan Women's Network (AWN), an umbrella organization of over 100 women's rights organizations and over 5,000 individual members, is a key stakeholder and partner. It also works with the Research Institute for Women, Peace and Security (RIWPS) and individual activists.

---

[19] For further information, see the Transparency International website.

4. UN Women strategy and activities in Afghanistan

Overview of country office and strategy

The Afghanistan office, one of UN Women's largest country presences, was established in 2002. UNIFEM initially focused on providing support to key government policies, legislation and programmes, as elaborated in UNIFEM's 2008–2011 programme strategy[20] (linked with a Southeast Asia regional strategy and aligned ultimately with UNIFEM's global Strategic Plan 2008–2011). The country programme strategy included support for and input into the creation and implementation of national strategy documents, including the ANDS and NAPWA, as well as supporting MoWA. It also provided substantial support in the area of women's access to justice, particularly VAW and women's economic empowerment.

In light of increased demands on the United Nations system to support the Afghan government as one, UN Women's corporate strategic process and the development of the Strategic Note and Annual Workplan 2012–2013 and the strengthening of UN Women's field presence, UN Women Afghanistan was in the process of strengthening its structure to better meet demands from national partners and the United Nations system as the transition to UN Women is consolidated.

The regional office for the Asia and Pacific region was established in 2012, and provides overall guidance and strategic guidance to country offices. Located in Bangkok (Thailand), the regional office is currently staffed in accordance with the new regional architecture approved by UN Women's Executive Board in November 2012. The strategy outlined, among other changes, the establishment of six regional offices and six multi-country offices. The Country Director of the Afghanistan country office now reports to the head of the Bangkok regional office (rather than directly to headquarters) which was a significant change. However, it was unclear what impact the new regional office would have on UN Women's operations in Afghanistan, including what technical support and policy advice it would provide.

Within the timeframe of the evaluation, UN Women in Afghanistan was focused on and organized around five key priority areas:

- Women, Peace and Governance *(WPG)*: Enhancing the participation of women in peace processes and increase the capacity of agencies to use resolution 1325 as a policy and programming framework. This includes building the capacity of female leaders (Members of Parliament [MPs] and members of Provincial Councils) to influence policymaking and legislative processes, and working closely with civil society to support advocacy for women's inclusion in key decision-making processes, and events such as international conferences.

- Elimination of Violence Against Women *(EVAW)*: Improving the capacity of formal institutions, NGOs and CSOs to address the preventive, remedial and developmental aspects of VAW.

- Gender and Justice: Integrating a gender perspective into all dimensions of justice so that; legal and judicial systems function and are gender-sensitive; discriminatory laws and policies are reformed; and laws acknowledge and protect the universal rights of women and men equally.

- Women Economic Security and Rights: Increasing the capacity of women to advocate effectively for opportunities to build sustainable economic assets.

---

[20] Extended until 31 October 2012.

- Institutional Capacity Development Unit: Supporting other units within UN Women and externally (such as MoWA) to enhance their systems and capacities for gender equality and the inclusion of women.

UN Women's work is aligned with the government's overall goals and contributes to the priority areas of UN Women's Strategic Plan. UN Women chairs the UNCT Gender Working Group and the Gender Donor Coordination Group. UN Women is also an active member of UNCT strategic working groups, such as the Task Forces for Communications, Transition, Early Marriage and Gender-based Violence (GBV). UN Women also leads the Women, Peace and Security Working Group, which is open to all international and national organizations, including government agencies, working on women, peace and security in Afghanistan. UN Women co-chairs the Gender Mainstreaming Task Force with MoWA.

Description/analysis of selected programmes

Women as Peacebuilders

The WPB programme aims to 'strengthen women's participation in peace, security, and reconciliation processes by building the capacities of WPB and by providing technical assistance to international actors for the integration of resolution 1325 as a central framework for implementing security and stability goals' (UNIFEM, 2010. 3). The project provides both long-term and ad hoc support, primarily focused on advocacy.

The programme also facilitates and coordinates several key fora in Kabul, including providing administrative support and direction to the Women, Peace and Security Working Group (WPS WG). Established in 2010, the WPS WG includes the government, civil society, donors and international organizations, with the objective of supporting the implementation of resolution 1325 and other relevant resolutions. UN Women also ensures that the WPS WG coordinates with other relevant entities, including the Gender Donors Coordination Group, the Transitional Justice Working Group, the MoWA Gender Mainstreaming Task Force, the Gender-based Violence sub-cluster, the Civil Society Task Force for resolution 1325 and related conventions and HPC female members. It is also supporting the technical advisory group and MoFA, in partnership with the Government of Finland, to develop the national action plan (NAP) to support the implementation of resolution 1325.

It also supported women's involvement in several high-level events on peace and security dialogue, including the annual Peace Day, international conferences (such as the London Conference [2010], the Bonn Conference [2011] and the Tokyo Conference [2012]), as well as the 2010 National Consultative Peace Jirga and the 2011 Loya Jirga. In these activities and other advocacy, it provided support, funding and technical advice to AWN and its members to expand opportunities and strengthen the capacity of peace actors. As a result of this advocacy, women's participation and the inclusion of women's perspectives were important outcomes of the above mentioned conferences and other relevant events and processes. For example, women's representation increased to 25 per cent, the highest-ever participation of women in a traditional Jirga. It also supported the creation of Af-Pak dialogue between female activists in both countries, starting with Phase I of the project in 2008. However, recent security and other issues delayed further action on this dialogue.

A key initiative was to provide support to women in parliament through the establishment of a Resource Centre for Women in Parliament (RCWP). Created in 2006 within the vicinity of the parliament building, the RCWP was moved in 2011 for security reasons to the *Shar-e-Naw* area of Kabul, and then more recently to a location within parliament. The resource centre is equipped with a modest library of books on relevant gender and political issues, six desktop computers, a printer, scanner, photocopier and other equipment. The RCWP's

publicly stated objective is to 'enhance the capacity, technical and institutional knowledge, and public communications skills of elected women officials so that they are better prepared to include women's voices and perspectives effectively in national development and reconstruction plans' (UN Women, 2011). At the time of the evaluation, it was supported on site by one UN Women staff member as a Gender Assistant. Another more senior national staff position, Gender Advisor, exists to support the RCWP, the Parliamentary Women's Commission and female MPs more generally. The position was vacant at the time of the field research while recruitment of the Gender Advisor to parliament was finalised on 20 March 2013.

Elimination of Violence Against Women Special Fund

The EVAW SF was administered by UN Women to support community-based response mechanisms and capacities to address VAW. The EVAW SF arose out of a series of discussions on a 2007 report issued by UNIFEM and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in cooperation with several CSOs (UN Women, 2011).[21] The EVAW SF was established in August 2007 and became operational in October 2007. It was formally launched by UNIFEM and EVAW SF donors on International Women's Day, 8 March 2008. With a central focus on strengthening the capacity of CSOs, it focused on three key areas of intervention: protection services, reintegration and psychosocial support; lobbying, advocacy and awareness-raising; and legal aid and access to justice. While not explicitly linked to peace and security issues, the endemic levels of VAW in Afghanistan were seen by several UNIFEM staff and external stakeholders as inextricably (though not exclusively) linked to the past three decades of conflict, which guided the decision to include it in this case study. According to UN Women's records, from 2008 to 2010 the EVAW SF supported 28 NGOs in 23 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, reaching approximately two million beneficiaries at a cost of $2,738,064 through three calls for proposals. In 2010, it supported 12 NGOs in 17 provinces through a fourth call for proposals in which (11 million beneficiaries by BBC programmes) plus 119,957 beneficiaries the rest of 11 projects were reached.

During this period, EVAW SF focused on two core components. Component one focused on the three key areas of intervention noted above as well as operational research and comparative study for best practice of EVAW implementation. Interventions included awareness-raising with local populations and government officials (including judges, teachers, police officers and others). In 2011, support was also provided for family guiding centres (providing mediation and reintegration support) and four women's shelters run by Afghan NGOs in Kabul, Kapisa and Bamiyan provinces. Shelter support was evaluated by an external consultant in 2011.[22] Component two focused on strengthening institutional capacities which addressed EVAW through national and regional policy-making processes and mechanisms, including cross-sectoral activities involving other UNIFEM sections such as gender and justice and women's economic security and rights (UN Women, 2011).

In 2012, EVAW SF supported 13 NGO and government partners across 12 provinces (UN Women, 2012b). However, in June 2012, its strategic direction significantly shifted following the EVAW SF Advisory Board's revision of standard operating procedures. The revision determined two key changes: the inclusion of qualified government applicants and capacity assessments of implementing partners prior to grant allocation. The new strategic direction, formulated by assessments with stakeholders, also resulted in changes to the central objective and core components. The central objective of the EVAW SF at present is to 'catalyse

---

[21] The consultant was not able to obtain the original report.
[22] Original report not available, but a summary of the shelter evaluation is provided in UN Women (2011).

significant growth in prevention and response mechanisms, and develop capabilities for bridging the gap between civil societies and government for implementation of EVAW laws at the community level and support services to victims of EVAW' (UN Women, 2011).

The programme recognizes that the EVAW SF rests within the context of the larger EVAW programme, which encompasses access to justice as well as protection and, as such, is now oriented around two core components: prevention of VAW and response to VAW. Prevention focuses on increasing public awareness of VAW (through implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's UNiTE to End Violence Against Women Campaign and capacity-building of community leaders and service providers) and, at policy level, the development and implementation of a multi-sectoral national strategy and action plan for VAW prevention and EVAW law adaptation. Response activities are premised on the assumption that response to EVAW can only be effective through strengthening national institutional capacities. Therefore, aside from the shelter initiatives, EVAW activities also focus on developing a national GBV referral framework and the implementation of a national GBV referral system. The development of the GBV referral system is a joint programme with UNFPA and WHO, in collaboration with the Ministries of Public Health, Women's Affairs, Interior and Foreign Affairs. Response also includes the expansion of protection centres (shelters) for women and family guidance centres. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) throughout the UN Women country office received greater focus, with M&E action plans and checklists now developed, as well as a plan in place to contract third-party monitors, a financial audit and an external evaluation in 2013.

5.   Findings

Analysis of theories of change

In keeping with the objective of the evaluation exercise, the underlying theories of change underpinning programming and practice were considered. While the UN Women country office did not use the terminology 'theory of change', the concept was described to interviewees. The theory of change underlying interventions examined and the wider portfolio of projects appeared tenuous. Many staff interviewed could not provide one when asked and often saw projects as being donor-driven instead. Staff also felt that the lack of core funding and resultant project-based approach prevented a holistic theory of change underpinning UN Women's various interventions. This was reinforced by UNIFEM's project focus, but shifted with the restructuring of the Afghanistan country office to support a programmatic approach. During the process of developing the country programme a more detailed approach will be taken, in terms of contextual analysis as well as institutionalizing the results logic which underpins how change is expected to obtain, in order to ensure a relevant and coherent programme strategy.

The evaluation observed the need for better conflict analysis to inform programming and practice during interventions, in addition to the analysis done within the common country assessment process guiding the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), to ensure sustainable and strategic interventions. While situational analysis, which included conflict-related factors and an application of the 'do no harm' principle, was sometimes inherent to or evident in some project design, it was less developed, was not applied consistently across projects and did not always inform project implementation. In addition, there appeared to be a lack of sufficient M&E in many projects (including articulated logframes and other key tools), making it difficult to learn from interventions, measure effectiveness, and ensure sustainability and appropriateness. The focus of monitoring and documenting progress was frequently structured almost exclusively around

reporting required by donors which often resulted in project implementation being focused almost exclusively on the output level. The issue appeared to be in the process of being addressed, in particular through the recruitment of staff with M&E capacities, as well as updating of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Plan for the office. Senior country office staff also reported that a recent redesign of the country office's process for project/programme formulation to ensure a uniform approach, use of data and coherence with the its Strategic Note should address the other issues.

Support to government institutions has been seen as critical to effecting change. While the focus was primarily on MoWA, more recently UN Women sought to expand and strengthen partnerships with other ministries and government bodies. The intent behind this recognized MoWA's weak position vis-à-vis other ministries and the need to influence policy and programmes on peace and security through both direct engagement with these other ministries and through ongoing support to MoWA. There was also growing recognition, particularly in light of the uncertainty around conditions after 2014, of the need to expand engagement with civil society actors beyond implementing projects, and to work equally at the policy and advocacy levels.

At the project level, theories of change articulated in project documents were often vague or incomplete and staff often had difficulty articulating their own understandings of the assumptions and analysis underpinning the projects they were working on. However, as noted in the inception report, the absence of clear, explicit theories of change did not mean that interventions did not follow a logic of change derived from assumptions about how certain actions were intended to contribute to concrete results. Drawing on project documents and interviews, Figures 1 and 2 identify and articulate theories of change for WPB and the EVAW SF, respectively. Outputs, outcomes and strategic plan goals are directly summarised from the Development Results Framework (DRF) 2008–2011 (undated), where applicable, but primarily from the 2012–2013 (November 2012). Inputs and underlying assumptions were less apparent in project documents, so summaries of each were extrapolated from interviews with UN Women staff and various project documents.

Some UN Women staff felt strongly that UNAMA's presence and mandate both enabled and presented challenges UN Women's work. The perceived politicization of the gender agenda by UNAMA has at times undermined and even contradicted UN Women's efforts, by either pushing or downplaying issues within UN Women's mandate in order to realise a broader political agenda. As a result, WPG in particular has suffered, as UN Women was not recognized as the lead on resolution 1325 reporting, support to parliament or serving as the key advisor on EVAW law. The Gender Unit of UNAMA, which chaired the UNCT Gender Working Group during the UNIFEM years, was not willing to step aside fully in order for the newly formed UN Women exercise its mandate. However, the Country Representative worked to carve out space for UN Women, both within the UNCT and with UNAMA, resulting in improved coordination and recognition by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of UN Women's role. The process is ongoing and country office management should be vigilant in maintaining persistent pressure to ensure engagement.
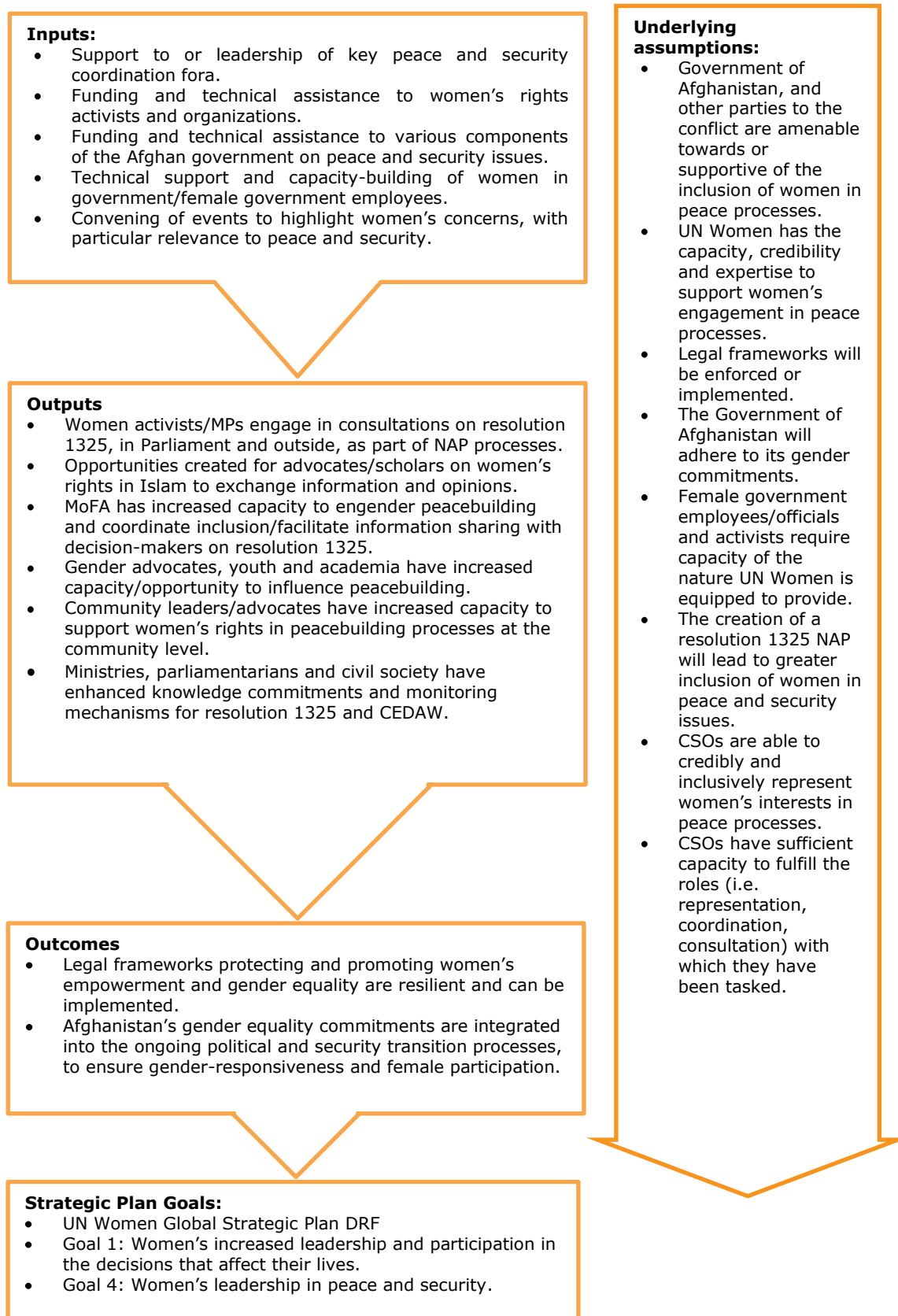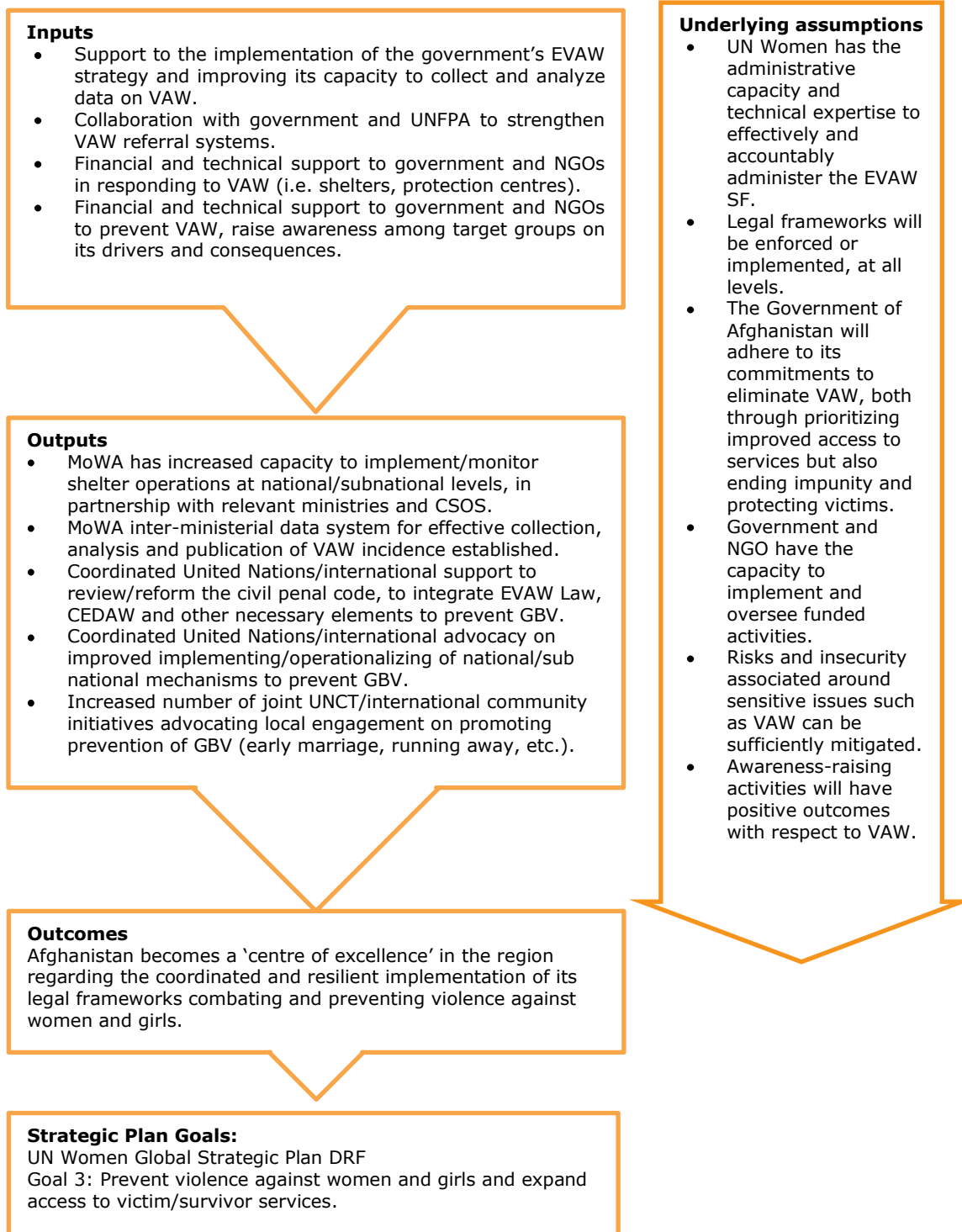
Figure 1. Theory of Change: WPB

Inputs:
- Support to or leadership of key peace and security coordination fora.
- Funding and technical assistance to women's rights activists and organizations.
- Funding and technical assistance to various components of the Afghan government on peace and security issues.
- Technical support and capacity-building of women in government/female government employees.
- Convening of events to highlight women's concerns, with particular relevance to peace and security.

Outputs
- Women activists/MPs engage in consultations on resolution 1325, in Parliament and outside, as part of NAP processes.
- Opportunities created for advocates/scholars on women's rights in Islam to exchange information and opinions.
- MoFA has increased capacity to engender peacebuilding and coordinate inclusion/facilitate information sharing with decision-makers on resolution 1325.
- Gender advocates, youth and academia have increased capacity/opportunity to influence peacebuilding.
- Community leaders/advocates have increased capacity to support women's rights in peacebuilding processes at the community level.
- Ministries, parliamentarians and civil society have enhanced knowledge commitments and monitoring mechanisms for resolution 1325 and CEDAW.

Outcomes
- Legal frameworks protecting and promoting women's empowerment and gender equality are resilient and can be implemented.
- Afghanistan's gender equality commitments are integrated into the ongoing political and security transition processes, to ensure gender-responsiveness and female participation.

Strategic Plan Goals:
- UN Women Global Strategic Plan DRF
- Goal 1: Women's increased leadership and participation in the decisions that affect their lives.
- Goal 4: Women's leadership in peace and security.

Underlying assumptions:
- Government of Afghanistan, and other parties to the conflict are amenable towards or supportive of the inclusion of women in peace processes.
- UN Women has the capacity, credibility and expertise to support women's engagement in peace processes.
- Legal frameworks will be enforced or implemented.
- The Government of Afghanistan will adhere to its gender commitments.
- Female government employees/officials and activists require capacity of the nature UN Women is equipped to provide.
- The creation of a resolution 1325 NAP will lead to greater inclusion of women in peace and security issues.
- CSOs are able to credibly and inclusively represent women's interests in peace processes.
- CSOs have sufficient capacity to fulfill the roles (i.e. representation, coordination, consultation) with which they have been tasked.

Figure 2. Theory of Change: EVAW SF

Inputs
- Support to the implementation of the government's EVAW strategy and improving its capacity to collect and analyze data on VAW.
- Collaboration with government and UNFPA to strengthen VAW referral systems.
- Financial and technical support to government and NGOs in responding to VAW (i.e. shelters, protection centres).
- Financial and technical support to government and NGOs to prevent VAW, raise awareness among target groups on its drivers and consequences.

Outputs
- MoWA has increased capacity to implement/monitor shelter operations at national/subnational levels, in partnership with relevant ministries and CSOS.
- MoWA inter-ministerial data system for effective collection, analysis and publication of VAW incidence established.
- Coordinated United Nations/international support to review/reform the civil penal code, to integrate EVAW Law, CEDAW and other necessary elements to prevent GBV.
- Coordinated United Nations/international advocacy on improved implementing/operationalizing of national/sub national mechanisms to prevent GBV.
- Increased number of joint UNCT/international community initiatives advocating local engagement on promoting prevention of GBV (early marriage, running away, etc.).

Outcomes
Afghanistan becomes a 'centre of excellence' in the region regarding the coordinated and resilient implementation of its legal frameworks combating and preventing violence against women and girls.

Strategic Plan Goals:
UN Women Global Strategic Plan DRF
Goal 3: Prevent violence against women and girls and expand access to victim/survivor services.

Underlying assumptions
- UN Women has the administrative capacity and technical expertise to effectively and accountably administer the EVAW SF.
- Legal frameworks will be enforced or implemented, at all levels.
- The Government of Afghanistan will adhere to its commitments to eliminate VAW, both through prioritizing improved access to services but also ending impunity and protecting victims.
- Government and NGO have the capacity to implement and oversee funded activities.
- Risks and insecurity associated around sensitive issues such as VAW can be sufficiently mitigated.
- Awareness-raising activities will have positive outcomes with respect to VAW.

Assessment of evaluation questions

Dimension 1: UN Women's policy and strategic direction

In what ways did UN Women influence policies and practice (within the United Nations system as well as in key external agencies) in relation to women's political participation and leadership in peace and security?

In the absence of an official peace process, efforts by UN Women and all international and national actors working on women, peace and security were limited. UN Women strived to ensure that women's voices were heard in international conferences around these issues as well as in national *jirgas*, to raise awareness and put women's leadership and equal participation on the agenda. It supported national civil society actors, primarily through the AWN and its members, to conduct research and advocacy on these issues to influence the government and donors.

UN Women appeared fairly conservative and narrow in scope with regard to these activities and lacked a strong, long-term strategic vision for peace and security. It focused on key international and national events (such as international conferences) and worked through/supported other actors. However, increased emphasis on advocacy and awareness-raising would have helped UN Women to better position itself and opened doors for other national and international partners to advocate for women's leadership in peace negotiations. UN Women's senior management expressed concerns over high-profile public advocacy which validated the frequent rhetoric that gender was an imposed issue from the international community and therefore anti-Islamic. Senior managers also felt that advocacy should be Afghan-led and -owned. UN Women (and UNIFEM) also provided support to female politicians, seeking to strengthen their governing capacity and voice on women's issues. It provided critical support on some key policies, including ANDS and NAPWA, as well as legislative issues, such as the incorporation of the EVAW Law in the criminal code.

However, given the complexity of the national context and the absence of a meaningful peace process, UN Women, at the time a non-resident entity in the UNCT, often struggled to demonstrate its added value on peace and security work vis-à-vis other United Nations entities operating in Afghanistan. Prior to the transition to UN Women, some UN Women staff felt that the country office was viewed as a UNDP project, with an unclear mandate and little political clout. UN Women still faces the challenge of a comparatively small budget and lack of core resources, which leads to donor-driven programming. Within the context of peace and security, UN Women has to convince national and UNCT partners of its credentials and mandate on a regular basis. These factors have undermined the entity's ability to be heard within the United Nations and the Afghan government. Since 2009, staffing problems, security issues and other internal issues, have resulted in UN Women at times being sidelined or forgotten on key issues or initiatives, such as peace dialogue and reintegration programmes. It had also more often than not followed an agenda set by other actors and been reactive to events rather than leading efforts, seeking to innovative or challenging the conventional narrative on peace and security in Afghanistan. However, due to the lack of resources and difficulties in recruiting a critical mass of technical expertise over the long-term, UN Women had to identify discrete areas where it could have an impact. Some UN Women staff felt that this resulted in UNIFEM's frequent deferral to UNDP and UNAMA, who had both clout and resources. Despite this, UN Women made some important contributions which should be recognized: among them, it contributed to the development of APRP's gender strategy and seconded a staff member to the HPC for two years.

There were numerous internal and external challenges to sustainability, including the dynamic and precarious nature of the security and political environment and the internal difficulties faced by UN Women (high turnover and barriers to recruitment, often due to security constraints, etc.; discussed further under Dimension 3). Additionally, conditions have changed dramatically in Afghanistan since 2008 in ways that would have been difficult to predict and plan for. Security has significantly deteriorated, with Afghanistan no longer a post-conflict country but experiencing widespread (although relatively low-intensity) conflict. The uncertainty of Afghanistan's future after the withdraw of combat troops and the lack of political dialogue with the insurgency renders forward planning difficult, tenuous and precarious. Additionally, the impact of the withdrawal of ISAF which coincides with the elections and subsequent change of government on the political atmosphere remains unpredictable, making it difficult to chart a strategic course.

One key issue regarding sustainability is UN Women's work with MoWA, whose primary function is as a 'policy' ministry supporting intergovernmental collaboration and coordination on women's issues, and to ensure that government policies and programmes are gender-sensitive and -responsive. While UN Women's capacity-building work – one of many of MoWA's supporters/donors – helped to improve the functioning of the ministry, such work remained highly dependent on donor support (UN Women, 2010). To varying degrees, similar concerns existed about many government ministries who receive significant donor support. In the case of MoWA, dependence upon donor support was as a result of it not receiving the required funding from the government budget. As a result, there was an over-abundance of financing in some areas and MoWA was able to cherry-pick, at least to a degree. UN Women staff reported that they often ended up doing key tasks, such as writing speeches and proposals for MoWA. However, with the restructuring, senior staff felt UN Women's support to MoWA should focus on building the ministry's ability to fulfil its coordination and advocacy mandate, and that increased engagement between the Minister and her deputies and UN Women senior management was reflected in the nature of requests being made of UN Women to support the Ministry.

UN Women's 2008–2011 programme strategy made mention of 'exit planning' in support for the Ministry, but none actually appeared to exist (UN Women, n.d.). Senior UN Women staff reported attributed this to unrealistic projections by the UNCT as a whole that Afghanistan would be at peace, and firmly on the road to recovery and development. However, UN Women staff noted that the new strategic approach would help address some of the issues by focusing on helping MoWA deliver its mandate in terms of advocacy and coordination within the government and nationally.

There were questions over the sustainability and appropriateness of aspects of other interventions, and at times a lack of understanding by counterparts or partners of UN Women's added value. UN Women staff working at the RCWP, for example, reported that it was used primarily by parliamentary staff (i.e. cleaners, security guards) and not the MPs themselves, who generally have their own computers. Thus, it was not evident that the intended beneficiaries (i.e. MPs) were being effectively targeted. The RCWP did however provide research support, particularly to new MPs and their staff. There were therefore also divergent needs among intended beneficiaries, and different perceptions about how voice is best facilitated. While some MPs were highly educated and experienced in government or leadership roles and outspoken, others were less so and required more fundamental support. When consulted, the former generally wanted UN Women to play a more strategic political role, while

the latter wanted more basic support, such as English-language classes. UN Women staff stated that English classes and basic computer skills had been provided, and that organizing coordination meetings between female MPs and activists constituted technical support. The senior Gender Advisor position in parliament (filled after the completion of fieldwork) will provide technical support to parliament's women's committee.[23]

Engagement with civil society was an important part of support to women's participation in Afghanistan and aimed at helping women become more vocal and heard on peace and security. However, efforts – such as sending women to international conferences and helping them undertake such representation – could be more strategic and sustainable if planned with a longer-term vision and given more comprehensive support. Although there had been some investment in longer-term capacity-building, UN Women's peace and security work appeared more reactive and ad hoc than strategic and catalytic. Both the delay in the preparation of the resolution 1325 NAP and the lack of a formal peace process undoubtedly presented external challenges in this regard. Many CSOs felt that more could be done to ensure effective collaboration and partnership between themselves and UN Women in terms of funding, but also in terms of more strategic engagement and advocacy work. Women's organizations and activists are increasingly sophisticated, especially in Kabul, and their expectations are higher (as are the expectations being placed upon them by others). Many require greater strategic support and engagement. However, at the same time UN Women must ensure broad consultations, so that perspectives reflect all of civil society nationwide.

How effective was UN Women in its policy engagement at different levels, including global, regional and national?

At the national level, recent efforts to develop relationships with other ministries, particularly MoFA and MoI with regard to peace and security and gender and justice work, were important. However, given the current heavy emphasis on security transition, particularly the prioritization of increased numbers of security forces and their operational capacity, gender concerns were in danger of being put on the periphery of development and political agendas. Additionally, there was a lack of clarity within ministries as to what gender responsiveness and gender equality meant in terms of their own mandates. For example, when asked what kind of support he would like to see UN Women provide, the Head of the MoI Human Rights Department requested infrastructural support, which UN Women cannot provide and which is not in keeping with its mandate. There was, therefore, the challenge of misperceptions regarding UN Women's role, which also reflects the challenging socio-political context. As transition progresses and the support of other donors wanes, UN Women may find new spaces in which to work with government partners. UN Women is well positioned with its new programmatic approach to engage these new partners and address shared priorities. However, within the context of the evaluation timeframe it was not reasonable to expect this given the different profile and level of engagement UNIFEM had had with its government partners.

Some UN Women staff and partners perceived a disconnect between policy priorities and initiatives at headquarter level and actual engagement in Afghanistan. At the same time, senior management reported that significant efforts have been made both by UN Women at headquarters and the country office in 2012-2013 to increase joint engagement and commitment to highlighting Afghan women's issues and facilitating their participation and input into global initiatives. UN Women country office staff felt that, given the unique country context,

---

[23] A notable exception was EPD's programming on governance at the subnational level. However, the consultant was unable to travel outside of Kabul to interview beneficiaries of this programming first-hand, as such it was not possible to make a precise assessment of its performance or sustainability.

communication with headquarters needed to be strengthened. The country office needs to better inform efforts at headquarters by providing more information of country-level process and interventions. At the same time, headquarters should support the country office with networking assistance to bring in lessons learned and good practices to inform the its efforts. Despite regular support to ensure participation in the Commission on the Status of Women, Bonn and Tokyo Conferences, several women's activists felt that more proactive and responsive engagement by UN Women in New York could result in greater impact on Afghan women's issues at a global level. The visit of the Chief of UN Women's Peace and Security Section in support of female activists around a national Jirga, for instance, was seen as useful in giving visibility to women's needs and experiences.

UN Women conducted less policy engagement at regional level, primarily due to UNAMA taking precedence in this area. While there was some initial support to engage regionally on peace and security work through establishing dialogue between Afghan and Pakistani female activists and parliamentarians, this was suspended as it did not fall within the priorities of the country office, given the greater resources and capacities of other actors in the larger political arena.

To what extent did the current policy/strategic direction reflect the lessons learned from policy engagement on peace and security and humanitarian response since 2008, and how fit for purpose was it for the new UN Women mandate?

It was difficult to identify lessons from earlier interventions or periods of engagement on peace and security given the low-profile engagement described in earlier sections, although wider engagement with Afghan government ministries beyond MoWA seemed to be one critical lesson learned. The EVAW SF was better placed to identify and benefit from lessons learned from previous challenges. The overall restructuring, however, was based on the lessons learned overall as a country office, in terms of focusing on improved partnerships, increased advocacy and ensuring that results were monitored and contributed to a strategic and more sustainable programme.

Dimension 2: UN Women's policies, programming and operations

To what extent did UN Women's programmes achieve the expected results? What explained variations?

The WPB programme aimed to:

- Improve the participation of women in peace processes;
- Increase the capacity of agencies to use resolution 1325 as a policy and programming framework;
- Support women's coordinated advocacy and build technical skills for direct negotiations; and
- Create a monitoring and accountability mechanism for the implementation of resolution 1325 by international security actors.

Progress on including women or gender concerns in many of these processes was hindered by the general lack of progress on security sector issues, suggesting that this may not be realistic or in line with the reality on the ground. There was no formal political process to end the conflict in which women could take part, and the lack of a resolution 1325 NAP suggested that developing monitoring and accountability mechanisms to measure adherence to resolution 1325 was premature. Nonetheless, UN Women supported women to be present at major

international/national conferences and public events where there were discussions on peace and security. Where women were initially excluded or sidelined (such as with the London conference), UN Women worked with civil society to ensure that they were represented. These efforts helped convey a public perception of women speaking out about their concerns and exerted pressure on donors to support women's rights. There was also a sense that such participation led to better outcomes from these events for women.

It was unclear if this has resulted in women being present in the ongoing closed-door diplomatic discussions that will ultimately decide these matters, or if women will have a voice in any eventual political talks and processes. The extent to which resolution 1325 is a relevant policy framework for Afghanistan given the current conditions, is debatable. However, UN Women's current work with the MoFA on the creation of a resolution 1325 NAP aims to promote women's engagement in the development and implementation of resolution 1325, and to ensure that commitments are put in place to secure women's involvement in peace and security issues.

The EVAW SF aimed to support:

- Effective implementation of the government's EVAW strategy, including the VAW database, and improving the government's credibility and capacity to lead on VAW eradication throughout the country;
- Improved consolidation, coordination, collaboration and synergy among EVAW efforts nationwide; and
- An increased number of projects and geographical outreach of the EVAW SF.

The EVAW pillar made significant progress in achieving many of these objectives, though much remains to be done given the near endemic levels of VAW and weak capacities to address it. The VAW database, which collects and collates information about VAW from various government and non-government sources, is now in place and constitutes an important knowledge resource. While it was difficult to measure improved synergy, the EVAW SF brought together a wide range of stakeholders and appeared to have improved coordination and collaboration where possible, particularly in monitoring and evaluating such programmes. The fund undoubtedly provided much-needed financial support for key EVAW programmes including women's shelters and family referral centres – both of which increased in number and geographic spread since the initiation of the EVAW SF. However, UN Women staff and partners felt that UNIFEM's cumbersome bureaucracy, overhead costs and time-consuming processes were seen as significant challenges by beneficiary groups and this this has been a main focus for UN Women since it was established. UN Women is in the process of rolling out its regional architecture, along with increased delegation to senior managers in the field. These initiatives aim to increase UN Women's efficiency and effectiveness.

To what extent was UN Women able to translate global policy/strategies into programmatic work?

In interviews with UN Women country staff, many felt that Afghanistan was a unique case both within the region and globally, and that the country office often had to advocate for recognition of the singular needs, context and challenges of working in Afghanistan. UN Women's work on resolution 1325 and other resolutions pertinent to women, peace and security in Afghanistan link up with work at headquarters and global strategic peace and security themes. However, the pace and direction of this work was necessarily led by the Afghan government and other partners which meant that expectations about what was realistic needed to be accordingly tempered. Moreover, the country office faced context-specific challenges in relation to how far global norms and standards were responsive to country conditions. Country visits from

headquarters were perceived to be too infrequent to ensure good understanding about the Afghanistan programme, and to ensure good links between the two. Additionally, civil society partners of UN Women's peace and security work said that they would have liked to see stronger links between UN Women's work in Afghanistan and the global women, peace and security agenda.

To what extent were UN Women's programmes tailored to the specific socio-political, cultural and economic context in which they operate? How was this translated into programme design and planning?

While there was a strong sense among UN Women staff that it had made good efforts to adapt programming to the changing context, it was not clear that this process was founded completely on evidence. The UN Women Change Management strategy document found that UN Women 'is not yet sufficiently positioned strategically in terms of an articulated country program strategy based on a comprehensive and contemporary situational analysis or needs assessment in relation to its core roles on gender issues and women's empowerment' (UN Women, 2012a. p 17). While the reliability of data and obtaining up-to-date or national-level data sets remained challenging, more could be done to draw on the body of evidence, expertise and data already available.

The sustainability of engagement with civil society actors raised some questions. Many Afghan organizations are highly donor-driven with little or no core funding. Donor funding is likely to decrease in Afghanistan in coming years, and it was unclear to what extent organizations would be able to sustain their programming and policy engagement.

While innovative, the sustainability of UN Women's engagement with shelters was constrained by several factors, including cultural norms, security and political will. The handover of shelters to the government in two locations was highly problematic, largely due to the lack of financial frameworks under which the MoWA could receive funds, as well as lack of institutional capacity and systems to administer them. While NGOs administering the remaining shelters appeared to have greater capacity, it was unclear where they would receive funding if not for the EVAW SF. The sustainability of these shelter arrangements for the women who live in them was also unclear, both in terms of their continued operations and the provision of durable solutions for the women which would enable them to leave the shelters and start new lives.

How effective was UN Women at identifying *and* using key opportunities and partnerships at country level?

Partnerships with national civil society actors were positive but could be strengthened and expanded, particularly with regard to peace and security. There were three core national civil society partners on peace and security work: EPD, AWN and the Afghanistan Human Rights Organization, which was contracted to work with universities, train students and provide lectures on resolution 1325 and the women, peace and security agenda in general. Engagement with these partners, particularly AWN and its members, could be more strategic and catalytic, resources permitting. CSOs were primary implementing partners for UN Women, and it remains important to continue to strengthen these strategic relationships, including through renewed efforts to ensure ongoing engagement with civil society. While UN Women's only office is located in Kabul and security restrictions make reaching many areas of the country difficult, UN Women should strengthen and leverage its civil society partnerships to ensure that the voices and needs of rural, poor women are heard and addressed (for example, EPD's work with female politicians at the sub-national level). UN Women recognized the danger of being perceived as favouring Kabul-based activists and organizations, and should find the resources to

broaden the net of engagement.

Partnerships with the government were critical but appeared narrow. Efforts to support the government, with a particular focus on capacity-building with the MoWA, were critical but there were significant concerns about the sustainability and effectiveness of this partnership. Throughout 2012, increased emphasis on accountability, national ownership and capacity-building of MoWA was sought by UN Women as a key contribution to sustainable institutional changes within the government and in the lives of women and girls. However, in the case of the EVAW SF, MoWA's limited capacity to administer the test-case shelters in Parwan and Nangarhar raised significant concerns around the level of political will to meet national obligations to protect women, as well as the reliability, within the current environment, of government actors outside Kabul, where influencing factors within the community affected the ability of the Department of Women's Affairs to carry out operations in a safe and consistent manner. Lack of clarity on how precisely MoWA should receive payments from the EVAW SF and a lack of timely responsiveness from MoWA on these issues resulted in delayed payments. While this issue has since been resolved, according to UN Women staff, the situation resulted in delayed salary payments, thereby placing shelter residents at risk.

How effective were UN Women's programmes at fostering/strengthening national ownership through country engagement of intended outcomes regarding improved leadership and participation of women in relevant peace and security and humanitarian response intervention/process?

With EVAW SF partners, the fund allowed national organizations and government actors to provide critical programming, driven by national needs. With civil society on peace and security and other issues, UN Women played an important supportive role in enabling Afghan women activists and others to speak out on key issues, while UN Women itself remains fairly quiet. This was positive in terms of national ownership, and needs to be more strategically supported by UN Women. Feedback from stakeholders predominantly in Kabul was consistent in that they wanted to see a stronger, more publicly vocal UN Women. Female activists made the case that, in doing so, UN Women will complement their own work and that of female politicians, thereby support their ability to exert pressure on the government, donors and other key targets. Their statements suggest a perception that UN Women faces less risk in doing this than Afghan women in public life, who are increasingly subject to harassment, intimidation and violence. In contrast, UN Women staff felt that UN Women may face some limitations in its ability to do this within the United Nations system, as well as the fear of negative repercussions arising from the potential perception of international meddling in issues which touch upon deeply held religious and cultural beliefs and traditions. Moreover, a calculatedly cautious approach is potentially politically more realistic. By speaking out on sensitive issues, such as the impact of the legacy of conflict on women or VAW, female activists felt that UN Women could help shed light on key issues and create an opening for others to pursue further engagement on them.

In what ways did the new mandate/reorganization provide opportunities to improve programme effectiveness and coherence between UN Women's policies and operational engagement?

As outlined above, the transition from UNIFEM to UN Women in programmatic and operational terms was perceived by many country office staff as still ongoing. However, building on UNIFEM's work, UN Women was tasked with a number of key coordination priorities at the country, regional and global level. In Afghanistan, UN Women has led UNCT policy discussions on a variety of issues, both internal and external, such as engendering the

Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework monitoring and the CCA/UNDAF, as well as the EVAW Law and United Nations support to resolution 1325, as discussed earlier. UN Women is gaining increased space on the humanitarian agenda, offering support to the gender marker process for determining the degree of gender-responsiveness of individual humanitarian initiatives proposed in the Consolidated Appeal Process documents, as well as overall technical support to ensure a gender-responsive humanitarian action process. This was being done with significant support from both headquarter and, more recently, the regional office.

There was a perception among many staff and partners that there would be little change in areas of focus in the transition from UNIFEM to UN Women, but rather an understanding that UN Women would apply a more strategic and longer-term approach in its thinking in order to shift from donor-driven project cycles to a more integrated programme approach. However, such a shift will not be feasible without significantly more resources and, perhaps more importantly, greater predictability/stability of funding (i.e. core funding). UN Women had already planned its first-ever all-donor meeting in April 2013 to present its new structure and programming priorities, in order to mobilise the resources needed over the period 2014–2017. At the same time, in order to have the flexibility to meet emerging needs and address areas or functions which do not fall under programmatic priorities, such as staff development, it is requesting support from headquarters for partnership-building and ensuring a solid and sustainable staff structure.

How innovative was UN Women in its programmatic approaches and what lessons can be learned that can be replicated in different contexts?

The EVAW SF's support on responses to VAW (i.e. women's shelters, family guidance centres) was highly innovative within the Afghanistan context, especially given that no formal shelters existed in Afghanistan six years ago. The EVAW SF also tried to improve operating standards and monitoring of these programmes, and encourage learning between the different implementing partners. The programmatic shift between approaches pursued in 2008 versus the current approach (discussed above) demonstrated reflexivity and adaptation. However, such innovation was precarious due to the sustainability concerns highlighted above and obliged the EVAW SF to move to multi-year funding, which will give its partners some economic security and enable them to invest in strengthening the quality, sustainability and accountability of their interventions.

Although the RCWP was, in theory innovative, it had not adapted fully to the diverse needs of female MPs. It was hoped that this will change with the recruitment of the senior Gender Advisor, and the request of the Secretary-General of parliament for expanded space to allow for more training offerings and accommodate more clients. However, to fully understand and address the needs of MPs, a needs assessment would be advisable.

Dimension 3: UN Women's organizational capacities, resources and structures

How adequate were UN Women's human and financial resources to effectively engage in conflict-affected countries?

UN Women was constrained by many operational factors. The difficulty of recruiting and retaining qualified Afghan and international staff inhibited its ability to achieve its objectives. Although a problem for most United Nations entities, and indeed international, agencies in Afghanistan, it seemed particularly pronounced for UN Women due to the lack of fixed-term posts. Moreover, exacerbated by project-base funding resulted in short-term contracts for most

staff, especially for national staff, and little job security.

The precarious security conditions and difficult living conditions at the UNOCA, Kabul compound, where the United Nations office and accommodation are based, also negatively impacted the ability to attract or retain staff (particularly internationals). An expatriate advisor position for the WPG Unit has been vacant for approximately two years, despite several rounds of recruitment. The Unit currently has four national staff members but no international staff which seriously limited what the WPG unit could realistically achieve, as well as its ability to engage strategically on these issues. Similarly, efforts to recruit the resolution 1325 NAP Advisor failed, primarily due to the challenges of attracting international experts to Kabul.

Recruitment was further complicated by UN Women's reliance on UNDP for human resources support at the national staff level, and headquarters for international professional level staff. While UN Women assumes the majority of substantive responsibility for recruitment (i.e. reviewing curriculum vitaes [CVs], conducting interviews, selecting successful candidates), it relied on UNDP to issue offer letters and contracts and associated administrative tasks which it often appeared unable to do in a timely manner. UN Women staff cited an example whereby UNDP staff took approximately one month to issue offer letters to successful candidates for senior national staff positions. Recruitment processes at headquarters are also protracted, leading to extended vacancies. Both factors led to lower levels of implementation, reduced trust in UN Women's capacity to deliver and an over-burdening of national staff in particular.

There also appeared to be a lack of staff capacity-building and support on substantive and operational matters. Staff reported that there was little or no induction (although UN Women management subsequently reported that an induction programme had been launched). As a result, staff did not have a clear idea of their role and responsibilities or the goals and objectives of their project or UN Women locally or globally.

UN Women in Afghanistan is the largest globally, but it relies almost completely on non-core funding for all of its expenditures. This issue is under discussion with headquarters, particularly in light of the potentially significant decrease in donor resources over the next five to seven years/post-transition.

How fit for purpose was UN Women in terms of the technical skills of its staff and its broader capacity to fulfil its mandate?

The challenge of attracting and retaining national and international staff affected the quality of staff in post. Retention was a significant issue. However, several donors and partners commented that it was not the number of United Nations staff or recruitment/retention issues, particularly with regard to national staff, that was most relevant. Rather, the technical capacity of national staff was sometimes problematic. However, UN Women already appeared to aware of these issues and in the process of addressing them. The country office reportedly reformed its recruitment process in terms of panel selections and ensuring consistency with United Nations Competency Interviewing guidelines, as well as working on mobilizing resources for staff development. Through the roll-out of the revised Programme and Operations Manual, UN Women staff reported that they were attempting to ensure that all staff were aware of country office rules, regulations and procedures.

How effective was UN Women at coordinating gender-related work across United Nations entities and other key partners?

Within the United Nations, UN Women coordinates the Gender Working Group, which is comprised of gender staff from United Nations entities present in Afghanistan. The purpose of

the Group was to provide a forum for information-sharing, with coordination where appropriate or feasible. Among wider stakeholders, UN Women coordinated and participated in a number of key fora, including chairing the Gender Donor Coordination Group. In relation to peace and security, at the time of the evaluation, UN Women lead the WPS WG (leadership is rotated every six months). Many stakeholders were positive about UN Women's leadership and felt that, rather than rotating, UN Women should continue to occupy this role indefinitely. It also participated in the resolution 1325 Technical Working Group and the subsidiary Technical Advisory Group, both of which were led by MoFA.

How effectively did UN Women manage risks in its operations? What strategies worked best?

Afghanistan is a highly insecure environment, and much risk management focused on the physical risk arising from insecurity. There was some indication that staffing problems, as well as security concerns and resultant restrictions, undermined UN Women's ability to fulfil its objectives. On 28 October 2009, a United Nations-approved commercial guest house was attacked and five United Nations staff members were killed which had 'a devastating impact on the work of UN Women and the United Nations system in Afghanistan'. The United Nations declared Afghanistan 'an extreme and critical' programming situation, which resulted in many agencies limiting their work in the aftermath and United Nations entities being required to reduce the number of international staff in Afghanistan to 40 per cent. By 2010–2011, nearly all international staff had resigned. UN Women during this period found 'it extremely difficult to recruit qualified staff for the international posts'. Additionally, there was a repeated change of Country Director. Although UN Women external reports stated that 'this was used as an opportunity to optimise the potential of the national staff, to set up emergency mechanisms such as the support site in Dubai and to institutionalize a long-term capacity development programme for national staff', it clearly had negative consequences for programme implementation and staff retention (UN Women, 2010).

While the parameters of security management are set by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), UN Women's security advisor, in consultation with the Country Representative, has some discretion. However, this often resulted in security management measures which staff said were stricter than those recommended by UNDSS. When the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) declares 'grey city', movement is limited to essential staff and many national staff (given the distance of many of their residences from the UNOCA compound) are advised to work from home. Senior UN Women management were of the view that, although this does not work with equal efficiency for all functions of the office, it was the best possible response under the circumstances. Several staff members found this made it difficult to work, as many did not have internet access or adequate facilities at home, and managers stated that the frequency of 'grey city' declarations made it difficult to monitor the work of staff.

Women's rights are a highly sensitive subject in Afghanistan, and UN Women sought to minimise the risks related to this. For example, the findings from the Oral History project, initiated in 2007, are still to be published due to such concerns. When consulted, donors and many partners felt that UN Women could more creatively manage this risk and perhaps be more outspoken regarding the challenges facing Afghan women. If not directly, they could leverage key relationships with donors (particularly the Nordic countries) to do so. In this instance, the country office would benefit from closer links with headquarters who could offer models and alternatives for consideration.

Staff at all levels were aware of the weak and deficient M&E systems. The change management strategy highlighted the need for a more systematic and integrated approach to monitoring, reporting and evaluation, which was echoed in interviews with UN Women staff. The M&E systems which do exist are currently project-specific, with little sharing across programmes and varying degrees of comprehensiveness and coverage. In general, staff members appeared to focus more on donor reporting than on developing internal M&E systems allowing them to track and determine the effectiveness of their work. An exception was the EVAW SF, which recently began to place greater emphasis on M&E, developing tools for key partners and enhancing its own monitoring systems. Such changes may be in part due to its comparatively greater resources as it was able to outsource M&E and hire an M&E Officer.

Despite the lack of comprehensive M&E, there appeared to be significant 'evaluation fatigue'. At the time of the field research, UN Women had recently completed a financial audit, a change management exercise and a mid-term review of Norway-SIDA funded programmes. All of these exercises, while worthwhile, took significant staff time and resources away from programmatic work and could be viewed as extraneous if they do not add some value or provide some perceived benefit to programme staff. With particular regard to headquarter-commissioned evaluations, extensive consultation and planning with the Afghanistan country office, from the inception of evaluation plans to communicating and discussing evaluation results, would be helpful in the future in ensuring that the process proceeds smoothly and findings are followed up on.

Overall analysis and implications for policy and practice

Normative and policy dimension

UN Women clearly influenced the national and international debate and policy choices relevant to advancing the normative goals of women, peace and security in Afghanistan. In particular, this was demonstrated by UN Women's support to women's participation in and the outcomes of key international and national conferences, and reflected in national policies and systems, despite the challenges and constraints of the political environment.

Working with the government to obtain policy and legal change was critical to put in place legislation which contributed to advancing the objectives of resolution 1325. There were mixed views on whether UN Women could be more forceful in advocating for further policy change in support of the implementation of women, peace and security, which would be more in keeping with the expectations of women's organizations.

Programming and operations dimension

With respect to Dimension 2, a thorough examination of the effectiveness of the programmatic interventions examined was beyond the scope of this study. However, for the selected case studies the findings were mixed. UN Women's programmes were generally tailored to the operating environment. Programme objectives around building capacity, with respect to both WPB and EVAW SF, showed positive outcomes. Yet the difficulties of gender work in Afghanistan made such progress hard won and tenuous. While there were achievements in improving national ownership, field research indicated that there is a need for more strategic long-term planning, despite the challenging political context.

Similarly, some innovative programming was identified in terms of both changing norms and creating space for women's voice and participation. However, documenting and applying

lessons learned from Afghanistan – and drawing from other country contexts – could better inform programming to result in more meaningful impact and advancements for women. It was difficult to ascertain the impact of the transition from UNIFEM to UN Women, particularly as it coincided with some of the worst security incidents in recent years. It was described by many in the country office as still ongoing, but current restructuring and other strategic shifts were positive and showed significant potential to improve the planning, sustainability and effectiveness of UN Women's interventions.

Operational, programmatic and strategic links between headquarters and the country office were seen as insufficient, and there was a perceived imbalance between the strong technical capacity at headquarters and critical capacity deficits at field level, technical and otherwise. There was a perception that more could be done to productively link headquarter and country levels.

Organizational, resource and capacity dimension

UN Women in Afghanistan has faced significant constraints and challenges since 2008, particularly in relation to security conditions and staff turnover, which coincided with the transition from UNIFEM to UN Women and appeared to result in a lower profile and less continuity/strategic orientation in programming than desired. While still struggling with fundamental issues of staff retention, programme planning/implementation, operations and M&E, UN Women appeared to have made significant progress in addressing these issues over the past year due, in no small part, to the strengthened management team (international and national), and other staff, underscoring the vital importance of senior management leadership. However, much remained to be done. UN Women's weak role within the United Nations, the lack of predictable resources, the absence of strong systems (with particular regard to M&E) and inadequate or inappropriate staffing remain formidable challenges. UN Women will require significant further support and strong leadership to address these gaps and weaknesses, as well as to earn trust and strengthen its reputation among key partners and stakeholders.

With respect to the withdrawal of international combat forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2014 and the uncertainty around what will happen next, there were serious questions about UN Women's ability and positioning to play a meaningful role in peace and security. To date, its support in these areas has been positive in many respects, but largely reactive. UN Women has a critical role to play in Afghanistan, and stakeholders and donors believe that UN Women could do more and think bigger. UN Women's value on peace and security is strategic and catalytic in nature, but requires a longer-term strategy, greater technical, human and financial resources and deeper, more consistent engagement to play this role meaningfully.

6.   Recommendations

To the UN Women Afghanistan country office

Policy/normative role of UN Women

UN Women's added value – particularly on peace and security – lies in its strategic and catalytic role, and it should continue to focus its engagement on peace and security at this level. Transition will bring greater uncertainty and UN Women must work with partners and stakeholders to prepare for this period. Longer-term investment from the United Nations system as a whole, more analytical and holistic approaches to empower women and stronger direct public and/or private advocacy with key stakeholders to enable women to voice their concerns on these issues will be required.

Going forward, increased investment to better understand how to strategically embed support for women's participation and leadership, particularly in government, in the peace and security agenda is recommended. While this is in part linked to context analysis and theories of change, more can be done to critically and productively examine which approaches and interventions actually yield or support greater sustainable empowerment of women in political and peacemaking processes.

UN Women can step up its coordination role, within the parameters of its country-level mandate, to promote and track implementation of resolution 1325 by the government and the United Nations. UNAMA has never had a female SRSG, and on only one occasion has a woman been appointed to either of the two Deputy SRSG positions. United Nations entities and embassies, to varying degrees, possess similar track records of having overwhelmingly appointed men to senior leadership positions. While beyond its mandate to effect change, UN Women can internally help to highlight the importance of women's involvement in peace and security issues within the United Nations in accordance with United Nations-wide commitments regarding women, peace and security (including the Seven-Point Action Plan).

Programmatic work

More emphasis on integrating context, power and risk analysis into programming should be given priority, although this varied significantly for the projects developed within the timeframe of this evaluation (2008–2011). Efforts such as the consolidated work plan funded by Norway and Sweden are key to encouraging a more holistic approach to UN Women's interventions in all priority areas, including women, peace and security and EVAW. UN Women should invest in developing systems, approaches and processes to ensure that its interventions are responsive to the context, conflict-sensitive and guided by the principle of 'do no harm'.

Increased effort and investment need to be made to develop sustainable programmes, based on national ownership. Better evidence and analysis and critical examinations of assumptions are required to ensure that UN Women's programmes are both effective and appropriate. Linked to this, increased input from key stakeholders (i.e. donors, CSOs and the government) could support UN Women's theories of change and the transition from a project- to a programme-based approach. The Civil Society Advisory Group, for example, could be useful in guiding programme development, and providing a mechanism for consultation and buy-in among the diverse actors with whom UN Women works. The advisory board could also help to improve oversight and accountability, and strengthen existing partnerships.

Sustainability is a substantial concern which needs to be addressed more consistently across programmes on women, peace and security, and particularly in regard to EVAW. In the absence of a formal peace process, UN Women should critically examine its peace and security support to civil society, in order to develop longer-term strategic thinking on building up civil society structures and relationships for the future. With regard to the EVAW SF, more investment should be made in mapping potential longer-term support to response mechanisms to improve their sustainability, as well as deeper analysis of how to enable women and girls to leave shelters and either transition back into society or return to their families in a mediated manner., However, the challenging and uncertain security, political, economic and socio-cultural context must be recognized.

Organizational capacity

While it was not within the remit of this evaluation (though it has some bearing on its ability to effectively fulfil the activities and objectives examined in this evaluation), UN Women is encouraged to continue its efforts to develop orientation and induction processes. UN Women

should ensure that all staff have clear roles and responsibilities, their performance is adequately measured and they are familiar with the ways of working and purpose of UN Women, as this has a direct impact on programme delivery.

Hiring qualified national and international staff was a challenge between 2008–2011, and remains so. UN Women should be supported in its efforts to hire and retain international and national staff with the relevant skills in political engagement and analysis and relevant thematic expertise. Hiring and recruitment practices should be decentralised to the country office to the extent possible, given the high turnover and extreme difficulty of recruiting staff (particularly expatriates), and given the challenging conditions of the context. Continued reliance on UNDP for recruitment should be carefully examined, and ways to improve this relationship should be explored. UN Women at headquarters and relevant stakeholders can play a bigger role in assisting the UN Women country office by deploying temporary support to fill immediate gaps, or providing candidates for longer-term recruitment.

To UN Women globally

The Afghanistan country office could substantially benefit from further engagement from headquarter and regional UN Women technical expertise on peace and security thematic areas, in terms of crafting strategy, lending on-the-ground technical assistance and elevating the concerns of women and girls in Afghanistan on peace and security at the regional and global level. As discussed earlier, the synergistic relationship between headquarters and the country office should be strengthened to ensure more strategic and informed exchanges.

High turnover and slow recruitment of qualified staff have, at times, caused delays in programme implementation and continue to pose severe challenges. UN Women headquarters should consider how to support the country office more effectively on such critical issues, either through assistance with recruitment and contingency planning or through temporary secondments of headquarter/regional staff to positions in the Afghanistan country office.

Organizational

Change management requires additional resources and support, not only for planning change but also for effective implementation. UN Women at field level is overstretched both financially and in terms of workload, and requires significant support throughout this process, either from headquarter or the Bangkok regional office, which the country office recently joined. While the country office's senior management recognises what needs to be done, there are insufficient human and financial resources to implement the changes in a complete and timely manner, particularly in terms of staff and programme development, while also keeping current programme implementation on track.

Related to this, the success of the shift from a donor-driven project-based approach to the programme-based approach UN Women is pursuing will depend on predictability and fund security, which has proved difficult with financial cut-backs by donors across the board in their multilateral development assistance. It is hoped that UN Women globally will be able to assure greater funding stability and increased core funding resources for UN Women in Afghanistan.

References

UNIFEM and UN Women documents

UN Women (2010). National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan: Institutionalizing Gender Mainstreaming in Afghanistan, Final Report to Norway, July 2006-December 2010.

UN Women (2011). Elimination of Violence against Women's Special Fund, 2008-11, internal document.

UN Women (2012a). Afghanistan Office: Revisiting Strategic Direction, Change Management Report V 3.0, 25 October.

UN Women (2012b). EVAW Special Fund Progress Report 201, internal document.

UN Women (n.d.) Strategic Plan Afghanistan, 2008-2011.

UN Women website 'Asia & the Pacific'. Available from http://www.unifem.org/worldwide/asia_pacific/.

UNIFEM (2010). First Progress Report to SIDA: Women as Peacebuilders, 1 January to 30 June 2010.

Other United Nations documents

United Nations, Security Council (2001). Resolution 1386. S/RES/1386 (2001)

United Nations, Security Council (2002). Resolution 1401. S/RES/1401 (2002).

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Human Rights/ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2012a). *Afghanistan Annual Report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict 2012*. Geneva/Kabul: UNAMA/OHCHR.

UNAMA Human Rights/OHCHR (2009). *Silence is Violence: Ending the Abuse of Women in Afghanistan*. Kabul/Geneva: UNAMA/OHCHR.

UNAMA Human Rights/OHCHR (2011). *A Long Way to Go: Implementation of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law in Afghanistan*. Kabul/Geneva: UNAMA/OHCHR.

UNAMA Human Rights/OHCHR (2012b).

UNDP (n.d.) International Human Development Indicators, GII: Gender Inequality Index, http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/68606.html.

OCHA (2010). Afghanistan: Humanitarian Action Plan 2010. Geneva: OCHA.

OCHA (2011). Afghanistan: Consolidated Appeal, 2011. Geneva: OCHA.

OCHA (2012a). Afghanistan: Consolidated Appeal 2012. Geneva: OCHA.

OCHA (2012b). Common Humanitarian Assistance Plan for Afghanistan 2013. Geneva: OCHA.

OCHA (2013). Afghanistan: Common Humanitarian Action Plan 2013. Geneva: OCHA.

Other documents

Abi-Habib, M. (2013). Afghan Women Fear Rights Will Erode as US Leaves. *Wall Street Journal.* 13 November.

ActionAid (2012). *Women's Rights on the Brink.* London: Action Aid.

Beath, A. et al. (2012). *Empowering Women: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan*. Impact Evaluation Series No. 76, Policy Research Working Paper 6269. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Boone, J. (2010). Afghanistan Election: Fraud Could Delay Results for Months, Observers Warn. *The Guardian*, 19 September.

Crilly, R. (2012). Afghanistan Women "Still Suffering Horrific Abuse". *The Telegraph,* 11 December.

Derksen, D. (2011). *Impact or Illusion? Reintegration under the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program*. United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Peace Brief 106. Washington, DC: USIP.

Harooni, M. (2012). Woman, Children Beheaded in Afghan "Honour Killing". *Reuters,* 4 July.

IRIN (2012). Afghanistan: Drawdown Focuses Aid Workers' Minds. *IRIN,* 21 May.

Khan, A. (2002). Afghan Refugees Experience of Conflict and Disintegration. *Meridians* 3:1.

Nordland, R. (2012). Afghan Army's Turnover Threatens U.S. Strategy. *New York Times,* 15 October.

Physicians for Human Rights (1998). *The Taliban's War on Women: A Health and Human Rights Crisis in Afghanistan*. Boston: Physicians for Human Rights.

Sarhaddi Nelson, S. (2009). Threats Cloud Afghan Women's Political Ambitions, *National Public Radio,* 5 August.

Tolo News (2012). Laghman's Women's Affairs Official Assassinated. *Tolo News,* 10 December.

Turton, D. and P. Marsden (2002). *Taking Refugees for a Ride? The Politics of Refugee Return to Afghanistan*. Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit.

UN Women (2011). Afghanistan National Parliament to Establish Resource Centre to Promote Women's Role in Decision-Making Processes. Available from http://www.unwomen.org/2011/08/afghanistan-resource-centre-women-parliamentarians/. 24 August.

Vogt, H. (2012). Karzai Backs Strict Guidelines for Women. *Associated Press,* 7 March.

World Bank (n.d.). Afghanistan Country Overview. Available from http://www.worldbank.org.af/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/AFGHANISTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20154015~menuPK:305992~pagePK:141137~piPK:141127~theSitePK:305985,00.html.

Interviews

External stakeholders, partners and others

Organization	Function/Title
UN Women	Country Representative
UN Women	Deputy Country Representative
UN Women	EVAW Special Fund Coordinator
UN Women	EVAW Protection Officer
UN Women	Gender and Justice Officer in Charge
UN Women	Gender and Justice Programme Associate
UN Women	Parliament Resource Centre Assistant
UN Women	WPG Officer in Charge
UN Women	WPG Programme Associate
UN Women	Field Security Officer
Afghan Women's Network	Acting Director
Afghan Women's Education Centre	Director
Afghan Women Skills and Education Centre	Executive Director
Afghan Women's Skills Development Centre /Shelter Network	Director
Embassy of Finland	First Secretary
Embassy of Sweden	Second Secretary
Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan	Chairwoman
Human Rights Watch	Researcher
Medica Afghanistan	Executive Director
Norway-SIDA	Mid-term review consultants (hired by UN Women)
Afghan Parliament	Member of Parliament, Ghazni
Afghan Parliament	Member of Parliament, Kabul
Gender Affairs Unit, Ministry of Interior	Director
Ministry of Women's Affairs	Deputy Minister
Ministry of Women's Affairs	Director for Legal and Human Rights
Organization for Human Welfare	Deputy Managing Director
United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan Human Rights	Protection Officer
United Nations Development Programme	Afghan Peace and Reintegration Programme Team
United Nations Population Fund	Gender Assistant

| United Nations Population Fund | Gender Specialist |

ODI is the UK's leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues.

Our mission is to inspire and inform policy and practice which lead to the reduction of poverty, the alleviation of suffering and the achievement of sustainable livelihoods.

We do this by locking together high-quality applied research, practical policy advice and policy-focused dissemination and debate.

We work with partners in the public and private sectors, in both developing and developed countries.