



Evaluation Summary



International
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WIN-WIN: GENDER EQUALITY MEANS GOOD BUSINESS – Midterm evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Uruguay

Mid-Term Evaluation: October 2019 – March 2020

Evaluation Mode: Independent

Administrative Office: RO-Latin America and the Caribbean

Technical Office: ACT/EMP

Evaluation Manager: Cybele Burga (ILO)

Evaluation Consultant(s): Le Groupe-conseil baastel ltée (Melissa MacLean, team leader)

Project Code: RLA/17/03/EUR

Donor(s) & Budget: e.g.Total € 10,080,00 : € 9,000,000 from the EU and € 580,000 and € 500,000 from UNW and the ILO respectively

Keywords: Use the ILO Thesaurus
<http://www.ilo.org/thesaurus/>

Background & Context

The “Win-Win: Gender Equality means Good Business” Programme was launched in January 2018 and is expected to conclude in December 2020. It is jointly implemented by UN Women (UNW) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in six countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Uruguay)

and has a regional coordination and programming component. Its total budget of € 10,080,00 comprises € 9,000,000 from the EU and € 580,000 and € 500,000 from UNW and the ILO respectively.

Aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the overarching objective of the Programme is to contribute to women’s economic empowerment, gender equality, and women’s leadership by recognizing women’s active role in growth and development and promoting the commitment of private sector enterprises and employers’ organizations. Win-Win seeks “to promote EU and international shared principles and values of gender equality and women’s economic empowerment through the cooperation of the EU and selected Latin American and Caribbean countries” and its impact is defined as: “Contribute to women’s economic empowerment and leadership for sustainable, inclusive and equitable growth.”

Central to the Programme are the UN Women/UN Global Compact-sponsored Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs), endorsed by thousands of companies worldwide to guide and promote their gender equality agenda.

Evaluation purpose and objectives

The purpose of this joint, independent, formative midterm evaluation, carried out by an external evaluation team, was to determine progress from January 2018 to August 2019 towards the achievement of programme outcomes and identify course corrections that may be required for

optimal progress over the remaining programme period. The specific objectives guiding this evaluation are to: i) assess effectiveness and efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of outcomes; ii) identify issues of Programme design, implementation, and management; iii) identify lessons learned and good practices; and iv) provide actionable and strategic recommendations.

Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation was utilization-focused and consultative, drawing upon mixed methods deemed appropriate to evaluating GEEW considerations. The process was informed by “Most Significant Change” thinking, which balanced assessment against planned results and outputs with an open-ended approach to identifying and valuing the perspectives of stakeholders, especially beneficiaries. Across the entire enquiry, the evaluation team adopted a gender-responsive lens, integrating principles of equity and human rights. The evaluation was guided by the OECD-DAC Evaluation Standards and the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, as well as relevant UN Women, ILO, and EU guidance.

The evaluation team collected data across all six programme countries and regionally, via document review, 68 interviews, focus groups involving 31 participants, and an online survey that generated 149 responses. Field visits were undertaken to Brazil and Jamaica. Limitations included some challenges in accessing consolidated monitoring data and scheduling interviews, as well as in analyzing progress on Outcome 3 given its delayed implementation.

Based on triangulation and analysis of the various lines of evidence, the evaluation team developed the 16 findings summarized below and the associated conclusions and recommendations, as well as identifying a number of lessons and good practices.

Main Findings

Effectiveness

1 – Stakeholders across categories and countries value Programme contributions in areas such as capacity-building for women’s entrepreneurship; raising awareness; and providing opportunities and convening organizations and individuals to promote dialogue and knowledge exchange. Win-Win personnel have generated strong buy-in from a range of stakeholders and are considered a notable Programme strength.

2 – Contribution to increased cooperation between women-led businesses in Europe and LAC to expand opportunities (Outcome 1) has been one of the greatest challenges for Win-Win. Among the contributing factors, the evaluation identified flaws in the Programme pathway logic in this outcome, mismatched expectations between Programme personnel and EU, lack of trade promotion experience among Programme personnel, and limited engagement from the EU. Most progress under Outcome 1 has been on capacity building for women entrepreneurs and women in business and support to public sector women’s machineries.

3 – Programme contribution to a sustainable model of gender-sensitive private sector engagement to support the achievement of the SDGs (Outcome 2) has been strongest. Efforts to reach out to the private sector to promote gender equality practices have been positively received. However, programme support for the implementation and monitoring of gender sensitive practices was weaker.

4 – Progress on Outcome 3 was very limited at the time of the evaluation, affected by delays in contracting, lack of clarity from the outset about what the outcome would entail, and limited linkage with the programme’s other outcomes. Uncertainty remains, although the evaluation noted that the Programme had taken steps to advance this work after Programme midterm.

5 – Stakeholders appreciate the tools, knowledge products, and awareness-raising activities accessed through Win-Win, with the GGAT highlighted as the most valued tool by private sector companies. However, many would like more practical tools, more systematic approaches,

and easier access to tools and knowledge products. A number of stakeholders felt Programme tools and approaches are not adapted to small and medium enterprises.

6 – The Win-Win Programme has struggled to link its discrete communications initiatives to an overall strategic communications approach to provide a unified programme narrative and ensure visibility efforts serve Programme results. The absence of a consolidated online hub to raise Programme visibility, make tools and resources accessible, manage programme knowledge, and promote the formation of national and regional networks is a significant communications-related weakness.

7 – Win-Win has forged a variety of partnerships and collaborations at country level and, to a lesser extent, regionally, to promote synergy and facilitate results. However, despite efforts to work with and around other similar initiatives, in some countries, there is concern that Win-Win competes with existing national programmes.

8 – Greater and more direct involvement of EU in the Win-Win Programme would be welcomed by all parties and could strengthen Programme results.

Efficiency

9 – Time, personnel, money, technologies, and other programme resources generally appear to have been used as planned; however, staffing has been inadequate for the Programme's workload and the distribution of budget resources across outcomes and activities has tended to exacerbate some identified Programme challenges.

10 – The number and mix of countries selected for Win-Win has contributed to a richness of experience in the programme but undermines effectiveness by complicating coordination efforts and generating additional costs.

11 – Programme design, organizational structures, and the imbalance in budgets between the two implementing agencies create challenges for coordination and synergy between ILO and UNW. While in some instances the advantage of

joint work was apparent, and personnel from both agencies have tried to overcome the barriers, due to existing limitations, ILO and UNW components work largely in isolation.

12 – Programme administrative processes have often hindered rather than facilitated results, especially through slow contracting processes.

13 – Programme organizational structures, accountability systems, and coordination practices have placed burdens on implementing personnel and offer weak support for adaptive management.

Orientation to Impact and Sustainability

14 – With a few exceptions – including some ILO work with employers' organizations and work on masculinities – much of the Programme outreach has been limited to women and to private sector personnel already concerned with gender or diversity issues. However, the evaluation found some evidence of efforts to reach out to men and to address gendered norms and practices at a deeper level.

15 – The Win-Win Programme is increasing the profile of UN Women as a valued partner for the private sector, building on positive perceptions about its status as a neutral interlocutor and convenor.

16 – At midterm, the Programme had not yet made systematic efforts to develop a comprehensive sustainability strategy or leverage additional resources, although these issues were of concern to many stakeholders, both internal and external.

Conclusions

Effectiveness

The Win-Win Programme is viewed positively by a wide range of stakeholders and has carried out a plethora of activities, conducted an enormous amount of outreach, and established many formal and informal partnerships, but progress towards outcomes seems to be hampered by a focus on implementation of discrete activities in lieu of a strategic focus on high-level goals.

Programme results under Outcome 1 have been strongest in regards to capacity building activities aimed at strengthening women's business and entrepreneurship skills and knowledge; however, this has not led towards increased co-operation and linkages between European and LAC woman entrepreneurs or businesses, nor has there been clear progress towards establishing networking platforms.

The programme's performance has been strongest in Outcome 2, where the Programme has exceeded its target for new WEPs signatories and conducted outreach, capacity-building, and convening activities with companies and other actors. However, the link between outreach and awareness-raising on the one hand, and implementing and monitoring progress on gender-sensitive private sector models is not always strong.

Work on Outcome 3 was hindered by slow contracting processes and lack of clarity about the nature and feasibility of the envisioned financial facility. Steps forward were taken after midterm, but uncertainty remains about how this outcome will be achieved.

Efficiency

The evaluation found that many programme gaps and weaknesses are linked to design and management issues. Expectations among the three key Programme partners were not always clearly articulated or aligned, and flaws were found in the results framework. The uneven distribution of the budget has also contributed to challenges in achieving outcome-level results.

The evaluation also found that significant operational challenges undermined progress. These included late onboarding of key personnel; initial understaffing and delays in filling critical positions left vacant; non-aligned and complex administrative procedures; complex coordination structures and lines of accountability; the need to work in three languages; and the number, geographic dispersal, and distinctive contexts of the Programme countries. The time-consuming nature of the coordination and relationship-

building work critical to a complex, multi-actor, geographically dispersed initiative was not factored in adequately from the beginning and this at least partly explains initial understaffing and some subsequent problems, including a greater focus on day-to-day operations than broader strategic thinking.

Orientation to Impact and Sustainability

Mainly through its extensive outreach and convening, and also through its knowledge products, training, and support activities, the Win-Win Programme has started to generate some impact among stakeholders. Its best prospects for sustainability appear linked to the commitment and capacity generated through these activities, particularly around the WEPs, under Outcome 2, but also under Outcome 1 among stakeholders such as woman entrepreneurs and their associations, employers' organizations, and public sector actors. However, unless the variety of connections generated by the Programme can be consolidated and harnessed, sustainability will mainly depend on the commitment of dispersed individuals – mainly women – after Programme end.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1 – Conduct a joint, “quick” strategy exercise to examine the Programme logical pathways (an abridged theory of change exercise) to help clarify the link between activities and expected high-level outcomes, leading to a review and, if necessary, revision of the Programme LogFrame to guide and help prioritize the final year of Win-Win.

*For all programme partners, including EU FPI and ILO and UN Women senior managers, along with the Regional Coordinators and Programme implementation team. **Priority – 1 (High)**. This recommendation should be completed before the end of Q1 2020 (short-term). **Estimated budget impact –Low**.*

Recommendation 2 – In the Programme's final year, seek to consolidate results achieved,

narrowing rather than broaden the focus of activities based on a critical assessment of which activities and partnerships are best aligned with achievement of overall outcomes and likely to yield greater sustainability.

For the Programme implementation team, including ILO and UNW Regional Coordinators and ILO and UNW Specialists in each country. **Priority 1 (high)**. This recommendation should be completed before the end of Q1 2020 to guide activity over the remainder of the programme cycle (**short-term**). **Estimated budget impact – Low**.

Recommendation 3 – Depending on whether such action is aligned with the results of the exercise described in Recommendation 1, step up efforts to build and formalize linkages between EU and LAC woman-led businesses and entrepreneurs.

For the Programme implementation team, especially ILO and UNW Regional Coordinators, working with EU representatives, and with support from country-level Win-Win personnel. **Priority 1 (high)**. This recommendation should be completed before the end of Q1 2020 to guide activity related to Outcome 1 over the remainder of the programme cycle (**short-term**). **Estimated budget impact – Moderate**.

Recommendation 4 – In alignment with the results of the exercise described in Recommendation 1, top level regional representatives of UNW, ILO and EU must agree on realistic targets – and potentially a revised outcome or outputs – to guide efforts on Outcome 3 until the end of the Programme period. If the decision is to concretize the investment facility, a set of practical steps must be identified, linked to other Win-Win programme activities.

For all programme partners, with a lead role for the Executive Steering Committee, with the UNW Regional Coordinator and UNW ACRO senior managers and personnel, and with support from the ILO Regional Coordinator and country implementing teams. **Priority 1 (high)**. The first elements of this recommendation should be

completed before the end of Q1 2020 to guide activity related to Outcome 3 over the remainder of the programme cycle (**short-term**). **Estimated budget impact – Moderate**.

Recommendation 5 – Over the remaining Programme period, consolidate and promote Win-Win's function as a convenor, and promote sustainability of results, through efforts to develop and formalize national and regional "Win-Win" networks, linked to dedicated online resource and knowledge exchange hubs.

For the Programme implementation team, especially the ILO and UNW Regional Coordinators, supported by regional communications/knowledge management personnel and country-level implementation personnel as relevant. **Priority 1 (high)**. Following up on this recommendation over the remainder of the Programme period is considered critical for consolidating results and promoting sustainability and impact (**short-term**). **Estimated budget impact – Low**.

Recommendation 6 – Identify critical bottlenecks in contracting and other administrative procedures in UN Women and seek solutions to expedite and ease needed actions in these areas over the remainder of the Win-Win Programme cycle or plan well in advance for any contracting needs.

For UNW senior managers and UNW ACRO administrative and finance personnel in coordination with the Win-Win UNW Regional Coordinator. **Priority 2 (medium)**. This recommendation is considered critical for addressing administrative bottlenecks to facilitate progress to the end of the programme period, including implementation of other recommendations of this evaluation; however, it is assigned lower priority in recognition that the issues are not within the direct control of the programme and may be difficult to resolve in the available time (**short-term**). **Estimated budget impact – Low**.

Recommendation 7 – Across all Programme outcomes, seek opportunities for greater integration of ILO and UN Women work to allow the Programme and each partner to take advantage of each one’s value added and promote sustainability of progress post-programme.

For the Programme implementation team, including ILO and UNW Regional Coordinators and ILO and UNW Specialists and other personnel in each country. **Priority 2 (medium)**. To the extent possible, this recommendation should support improved programme management over the remainder of the Programme period (medium-term). **Estimated budget impact – Low**.

Recommendation 8 – Within Outcome 2 and aligned with the results of the exercise described in Recommendation 1, focus efforts and resources on consolidating support for implementation and monitoring of gender-sensitive practices in the private sector.

For the Programme implementation team, including ILO and UNW Regional Coordinators and ILO and UNW Specialists and other personnel in each country. **Priority 2 (medium)**. This recommendation should guide programme work related to Outcome 2 over the remainder of the Programme period (medium-term). Since this area has shown most progress to midterm, this focus is assigned lower priority. **Estimated budget impact – Low**.

Recommendation 9 – Consider options for adapting M&E processes for a more streamlined and user-friendly approach that allows ongoing consolidation of key performance indicators to support agile and strategic Programme management over the final programming year.

For the UNW Regional Coordinator and Regional M&E Advisor, with support from regional communications/knowledge management personnel, the ILO Regional Coordinator, and ILO and UNW country-level implementation personnel. **Priority 2 (medium)**. This recommendation is considered important for

optimizing adaptive management and reporting in the remainder of the programme period, but it is recognized that making changes in M&E systems at this stage in the programme cycle may be difficult (**short-term**). **Estimated budget impact – Low**.

Lessons learned and good practices for UNWOMEN and ILO

Lessons learned

For programmes like Win-Win with multiple complex factors, lessons include the importance of:

- developing a robust programme logic in a participatory manner ensuring a shared, clear understanding of the link between activities and high-level results;
- ensuring ongoing access from the outset to relevant experts in subjects less familiar to the implementers;
- planning for a relatively long inception period that ensures key personnel and stakeholders are aligned, expectations are clear, operational supports are in place, and sufficient time has been allotted to critical reflection on strategy and tactics;
- ensuring an appropriate communications function; and
- adequately resourcing and planning for the coordination and relationship-building work that is critical to managing diverse stakeholders and activities.

In terms of promoting the impact and sustainability of gender equality results, another lesson emerging from Win-Win is that:

- strategies for addressing gender norms and engaging men should be considered and built in from the outset.

Good Practices

Good practices emerging from the Win-Win Programme that were identified in the evaluation process include:

- hiring personnel with private sector experience, which has proven to be a contributing factor to engaging successfully with private sector stakeholders;*
- efforts by ILO and UNW personnel to take advantage of opportunities to share information and support each other's work despite design and operational barriers to synergy;*
- the programme's flexibility in working with and around other similar initiatives to avoid perceptions of competition; and*
- efforts to engage men and go beyond "empowering" women to address gender norms affecting men's assumptions and behaviour.*