
Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

*Review of MDG-F Joint Programmes Key
Findings and Achievements.*



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Equality and Women's Empowerment

MDG-F Thematic Study: Review of Key Findings and Achievements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Millennium Declaration identified Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as one of eight Millennium Development Goals and stated that it was an effective means to combat poverty, hunger and disease, as well as stimulate development that is truly sustainable. Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG 3) was established to, "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015." The MDG Summit 2010 called for further action to ensure gender parity in education, health, economic opportunities and decision-making through gender mainstreaming in development policymaking.

An important aspect of achieving gender equality is through the empowerment of women, be it through education, employment, and political representation, as well as by ensuring women's access to reproductive health services. Another fundamental step towards the realization of gender equality is to eradicate all forms violence against women. The 13 joint programmes for this thematic window on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment were designed to address these issues in a broad and holistic manner. For the most part, the findings show that the joint programmes have contributed towards the realization of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of women and girls, and also to the achievement of MDG 3 and other MDGs.

The joint programmes were carried out in countries with varying degrees of poverty and levels of development, as well as distinctive political, economic and social conditions. They were all structured at the country level and designed to address national development priorities in keeping with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and taking into account the goal of "Delivering as One". Most of the programmes involved a wide range of partners and the application of a multidisciplinary multi-sector approach in light of the fact that gender equality is a cross-cutting issue and therefore needs to be addressed in all spheres and areas (health, education, employment, political participation, etc.).

The major themes selected for the joint programmes reflect some of the regional challenges that remain in order to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Three main thematic areas were the primary focus: Gender-Based Violence, Economic and Political Empowerment of Women, and issues related to Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS. The interventions and approaches selected for the programmes fall into four categories: 1. capacity development; 2. legislative and policy frameworks and gender-responsive budgeting; 3. advocacy and communication (including sensitization, awareness raising and knowledge creation); and, 4. establishment of networks and mechanisms. Nearly all of the joint programmes (11) tackled Gender-Based Violence, and were designed in response to important developments within the United Nations over the last decade that have drawn attention to violence against women as a form of discrimination and a violation of women's human rights. Different forms and manifestations of violence were addressed by the joint programmes including trafficking in women and girls, traditional customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, domestic violence against women and others.

Diverse approaches and interventions were applied at different levels ranging from strategies to improve and implement national laws and policies which were found in the vast majority of joint programmes, to capacity building interventions at the local level targeting municipalities and local government bodies. All of the joint programmes included some form of training which varied from formal capacity building initiatives to holding information sessions as a means to promote gender equality and to protect the rights of women and girls. These interventions involved a wide range of specific rights-holders and duty-bearers. Interventions were also directed at the individual level by working directly with the intended beneficiaries to strengthen their capacity to claim and exercise their human rights.

All the joint programmes also concentrated their efforts on increasing public awareness and knowledge through the creation and diffusion of information and expertise as a means to bring about social change with specific results at the policy level. This was achieved through, for example, communication and advocacy activities, the development of studies and policy papers, and diverse tools and training materials.

Numerous beneficiaries and stakeholders (both duty-bearers and rights-holders) were targeted at all levels. A majority of the joint programmes involved the sectoral ministries and line ministries responsible for service provision; thereby reaching a large number of government officials including those working at local government level. Most of the programmes identified beneficiaries/rights

holders whose human rights were not respected and protected and largely belong to the most disadvantaged and excluded population groups.

Virtually all joint programmes were deemed to contribute towards the achievement of MDG 3. This was due to a large extent from the political recognition by many governmental authorities at both national and local level, who participated or were beneficiaries of the joint programmes, of the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as a means to achieve the MDGs. It was also a result of the collective efforts to foster political will, build capacity at all levels, and raise awareness in order to bring about significant social change in the society, particularly in regard to gender-based violence.

It is too early to ascertain the full impact of the programmes to date, however, there were some visible positive signs in the policies and laws adopted or strengthened, institutional building and the behavior change of the beneficiaries, as well as in the specific action taken by both duty-bearers and rights-holders towards the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment. In other words, there was clear evidence that as a result of the joint programmes the lives of many beneficiaries improved in all the countries concerned.

INTRODUCTION

The MDG Achievement Fund (MDG-F) was established in 2006 as an international cooperation mechanism intended to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) worldwide. The Fund was created through a generous contribution provided by the Government of Spain to the United Nations system in the amount of \$528 million Euros (\$US 710 million) and an additional sum of \$90 million Euros in 2008.

In 2012 the MDG-F Secretariat commissioned a series of thematic studies on the joint programmes focusing on the 8 MDGs that were carried out in some 50 countries in five geographic areas to help accelerate progress toward attainment of the MDGs. This study focuses on the thematic window related to Millennium Development Goal 3 – Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment. The primary aim is to document the key findings of the joint programmes carried out in 13 countries in different parts of the world.

The study is structured into 5 sections that cover the following:

- I. **Background:** This section identifies the general features of the joint programmes, elaborates on the purpose of the Millennium Development Goal 3, highlights the thematic issues in the joint programmes, as well as the most common approaches and interventions. The key beneficiaries and stakeholders are described and the specific trends and common features are also highlighted.
- II.
- III. **Achievements and Key Results:** This section covers the main substantive areas of work, progress and results of the joint programmes with a view to deepen understanding of the outcomes. It includes examples of the main achievements that contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment and address gender-based violence. It discusses the specific strategies that were applied through capacity development, legislative and policy frameworks and gender-responsive budgets, advocacy and communication, and establishment of new networks. It also addresses the thematic areas that were covered in particular including gender-based violence, economic and political empowerment of women and reproductive health.
- IV.
- V. **Sustainability and Lessons Learned:** This section covers the prospects for sustainability, key lessons and good practices.
- VI. **Conclusions**
- VII. **Recommendations**

I. BACKGROUND

A. General Features of the Joint Programmes

The 13 joint programmes were carried out in countries with varying degrees of poverty and rates of development, as well as distinctive political, economic and social conditions. They include an economic power like Brazil with great disparities and persistent patterns of discrimination, and Timor-Leste, a disadvantaged post-conflict country with low levels of human development comparable to Sub-Saharan Africa. All the programmes were structured at the country level and were designed to address national development priorities in keeping with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and taking into account the goal of “Delivering as One”.

The overall design and approaches of all the joint programmes were rather comprehensive and complex and generally set up to be carried out across multiple sectors and with multiple partners. Nearly all of the programmes were centered primarily on gender-based violence and included clear outputs and outcomes.

Several programmes made explicit references to the baseline surveys and situation analyses that were conducted to better understand the country context. (e.g. **Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia and Vietnam**). Moreover, it was noted that the situation analyses appear to have been used differently. “In some cases such as **Brazil** and **Vietnam**, they provide broad gender analysis of the country context vis-a-vis national priorities and gender issues as a basis for legislative and policy level interventions. In others, such as in **Bolivia, Colombia, Ethiopia and Namibia**, they are finely tuned and are presented as a rationalization for the programme’s focus on the specific issues.”¹

All 13 programmes were formulated in close consultation and collaboration with the country governments and civil society organizations. During the design and planning phase due consideration was given to adhere to the key elements of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, namely, national ownership, alignment and harmonization of aid. The duration of the programmes was originally set for a period of three years and they were mainly carried out between 2008 and 2012; however, no-cost extensions were granted acknowledging the difficulties in starting up.

Implementation involved a number of UN Agencies and national partners. This varied from a minimum of two Agency partners in Ethiopia to as many as 12 in **Vietnam**. The programmes also varied in the number of national government implementing partners ranging from only a few such as in Brazil and Guatemala, to as many as 13 in **Algeria** and **Morocco**. This multiple partners approach was intended to ensure a comprehensive response which would benefit from the comparative advantage and added value provided by each Agency. NGOs were fully involved as stakeholders in all programmes, as they had an interest in the outcomes and were normally consulted in light of their valuable role representing civil society. However, they were mainly identified as beneficiaries and were normally not included as implementing partners.² The choice of lead UN Agency varied in the joint programmes with UNDP, UNFPA, and UN Women primarily playing this key role.

The geographic scope within countries also differed with the majority of the joint programmes implemented in a number of regions. Some form of selection criteria was used in all cases which included, for example, the rate of poverty in the region and gender disparities, the presence of UN agencies and capacity to support the programme, as well as other factors such as indicators of vulnerability. The criteria were based on baseline surveys and situation analyses that pointed out the most vulnerable population groups and thus selected as the targeted beneficiaries (See below under Beneficiaries) For example, in **Bangladesh**, the women most vulnerable to GBV were identified (e.g. migrant workers, sex workers). In **Bolivia**, the indigenous women living in extreme poverty with no access to financial credit were selected, and in **Brazil**, domestic workers, and members of highly excluded ethnic groups (e.g. Quilombo and Gypsy population) were identified among the most vulnerable. In **Namibia**, poor female head households were provided with skills and knowledge of how to produce food and generate income through vegetable gardens and livestock farming. Key statistics in **Namibia** that were used to identify the most vulnerable sectors of the population were: poverty headcount ratio of \$1.25 a day percentage of the population; HIV prevalence disaggregated by sex and age; fertility rate; share of women employed in the non-agricultural sector; maternal mortality ratio; proportion of seats held by women in national parliament; and ethnic groups and tribes.

¹ The value added of gender joint programmes: findings and recommendations to the wider community of UN agencies engaging in joint programming, MDG-F Knowledge Management Initiative for the Gender Window, UNDP, 2012

² According to the Gender Monitoring Reports 2012. Brazil identified NGOs as implementing partners.

The value of the joint programmes in US Dollars ranged from 3.6 million (Algeria) to 9 million (Bolivia and Occupied Palestinian Territory). See ANNEX for budgets of joint programmes by country and region.

B. Millennium Development Goal 3

The Millennium Declaration identified Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as one of eight Millennium Development Goals and stated that it was an effective means to combat poverty, hunger and disease, as well as stimulate development that is truly sustainable. Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG3) was established to "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015." Gender equality is a human right and is recognized as such in the major international human rights instruments. UN Member States have made significant commitments concerning the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment both at the international and national level. The majority of UN organizations have policies and/or strategies to enhance their contributions to and support of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE).

In its application gender equality means the absence of discrimination based on a person's sex. It applies to laws, policies, budgets, and to equal access to opportunities so that both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence, and affects all spheres of life. An important aspect of achieving gender equality is through the empowerment of women, be it through education, employment, and political representation, as well as by ensuring women's access to reproductive health services. Another fundamental step toward the realization of gender equality is to eradicate all forms of violence against women.

Box 1: What is Millennium Development Goal 3?

The MDG 3 aims to promote Gender Equality and Empower Women. The target is to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education by no later than 2015. The Goal of achieving gender equality is critically linked to other MDG Goals that aim to end poverty and hunger, reduce maternal health, reduce child mortality and improve child health, and combat HIV/AIDS. The following facts highlight the issues of concern that are interrelated and linked to achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

For girls in some regions, education remains elusive.

Poverty is a major barrier to education, especially among older girls.

In every developing region except the CIS, men outnumber women in paid employment.

Women are largely relegated to more vulnerable forms of employment.

Women are over-represented in informal employment, with its lack of benefits and security.

Top-level jobs still go to men — to an overwhelming degree.

Women are slowly rising to political power, but mainly when boosted by quotas and other special measures.³

The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012 states that the world has achieved parity in primary education between girls and boys and that significant progress towards universal primary education has also been made in those countries facing the greatest challenges. Moreover, since the year 2000 many more children are enrolled in school at the primary level with girls benefiting the most. However, it is also reported that "inequality is distracting from these gains and slowing advances in other key areas." The report further underscores that the key to making further progress toward achieving the Goals is gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as addressing the problem of violence against women which is recognized as a major obstacle to their attainment.⁴

³ Millennium Development Goals, www.un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml

⁴ Millennium Development Goals Report 2012, United Nations, p.5

“Gender inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and participation in government. Violence against women continues to undermine efforts to reach all goals. Further progress to 2015 and beyond will largely depend on success on these interrelated challenges.”⁵

The MDG Summit 2010 called for further action to ensure gender parity in education, health, economic opportunities and decision-making through gender mainstreaming in development policymaking.

In light of these developments, the joint programmes for this thematic window were designed to address gender equality in a broad and holistic manner, thereby contributing towards the realization of the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of women and girls. The overall design, purpose and structure of the joint programmes were rooted in the recognition that GEWE are vital for the realization of human rights for all. The main thematic issues selected reflect a deep understanding that in order to achieve gender equality, both *de facto* and *de jure*, it is necessary to build a society in which women and men share equally in the distribution of power and influence and have equal opportunities to education, health, decent work and livelihoods.

C. Thematic Issues Addressed in the 13 Joint Programmes

The major gender themes selected for the joint programmes reflect some of the regional challenges that remain in order to achieve GEWE. For example, in Northern Africa and Latin America women are far more likely than men to be engaged in vulnerable employment, particularly in the informal sector without the benefit of rights and privileges. In both regions supporting the economic empowerment of women was a priority area selected for several joint programmes. Women’s political empowerment was another major area of focus in light of the fact that overall, their parliamentary representation and in other decision making positions remains low, despite recent increases. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was selected as a priority area in all the regions and some programmes dealt with more than one thematic issue.

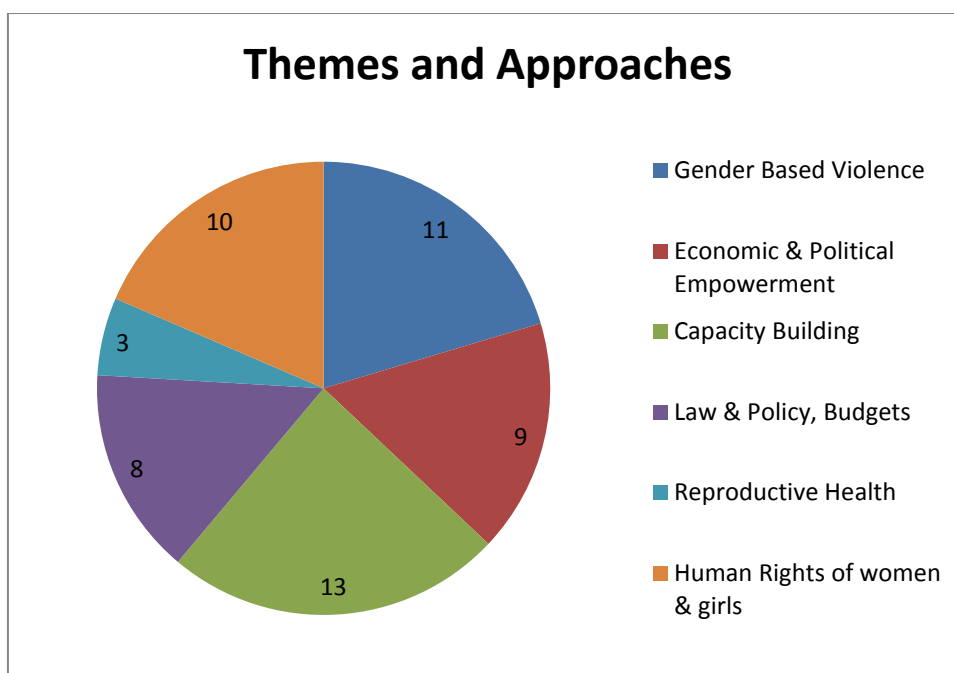
The choice of thematic areas for the 13 joint programmes was as follows:

- 11 addressed GBV either directly as the main focus area or indirectly through interventions and activities designed to protect the rights of women and girls including the right to live free from violence.
- 10 addressed diverse gender issues within the context of human rights and underscored the promotion, protection and realization of women and girls’ rights as a major goal.
- 9 focused on the economic and political empowerment of women.
- 3 concentrated efforts on promoting reproductive rights and access to reproductive health services.

The main choice of approaches for the 13 joint programmes was as follows:

- All 13 concentrated on capacity building of institutions and of both rights-holders and duty-bearers (e.g. beneficiaries, stakeholders, authorities at all levels).
- 8 focused primarily on strengthening laws, policies and budgets.
- All joint programmes included advocacy and communication to raise awareness and increase support for GE and in relation to GBV.

⁵ Ibid



Note: Choice of Themes and Approaches of 13 joint programmes calculated by percentage: GBV 85%, Economic & Political Empowerment 69%, Capacity Building 100%, Law & Policy, Budgets 62%, and Reproductive Health 23%.

A vast majority of the joint programmes (11) tackled GBV, which was described by CEDAW Committee as “a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women’s ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men”.⁶ WHO and others have pointed out that worldwide, one in three women will have experienced violence at some point during her lifetime.⁷ The joint programmes focusing on GBV were also designed in response to important developments within the United Nations over the last decade that have drawn attention to violence against women as a form of discrimination and a violation of women’s human rights. This point was reaffirmed in the Secretary General’s Report on Violence against Women.⁸ Moreover, States in all regions of the world have made commitments to protecting the rights of women and girls by becoming signatories to numerous international human rights treaties and declarations.

The outcomes of the joint programmes show greater understanding by different actors including authorities at the highest levels of government of the nature and scope of GBV. Different forms and manifestations of violence were addressed by the joint programmes including trafficking in women and girls, traditional customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, domestic violence against women and others. Significant progress was achieved by strengthening legislative and policy frameworks, through prevention and awareness-raising, and the provision of social services to victims of violence.

Although GBV was the main focus of 11 joint programmes, greater emphasis was placed in some countries, while in others it was either one of the priority areas or selected aspects of violence were addressed:

- Greater emphasis on GBV was placed in: **Bangladesh, Colombia, Morocco, and Occupied Palestinian Territory**. In **Vietnam** one of the outcomes was the development of a framework to implement and monitor domestic violence prevention and the implementation of the new domestic violence law.
- It was a priority area of concern in the joint programmes in **Ethiopia, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Timor-Leste**.

⁶ CEDAW General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) The rights and freedoms include the right to life, the right not to be subject to torture, the right to equal protection according to humanitarian norms in time of conflict, the right to liberty, the right to equal protection under the law, the right to equality in the family, the right to health and the right to just and favorable conditions of work.

⁷ MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women, www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/gender/en/html

⁸ Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations – In-depth study on all forms of violence against women, A/61/122/Add.I 6 July 2006.

- In a few cases such as in **Brazil** and **Namibia**, GBV was included as one of many issues addressed in the activities of the joint programme. For example, in Brazil the focus was also on gender, racial and ethnic discrimination, the health status of the Afro population, the feminization of HIV/AIDS and issues concerning domestic workers. In both of these countries the programme was deemed to have added value to the on-going campaign against GBV namely, the 16 Days of Activism against GBV, in partnership with NGOs.

Thus, this thematic area of choice reflects the international community's concern that GBV persists in every country of the world, "as a pervasive violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality".⁹

Despite the many international human rights instruments ratified by a vast majority of States, gender equality remains to be realized *de facto* and many disparities between men and women persist. Women are still more likely than men to be poor and illiterate and with less access to health including reproductive health care. They also lack property ownership, control of land or other resources, credit and access to decent work. The vast majority of women in developing countries are less likely than men to be active politically and to hold decision-making positions. In light of these well-known facts, some of the joint programmes were designed explicitly to strengthen women's economic and political empowerment. Many of these issues were dealt with in the majority of the joint programmes implemented in **Algeria, Bolivia, Brazil, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Timor-Leste**. For example, income generating activities were carried out in **Algeria, Ethiopia and Bolivia**, and political empowerment and participation of women in decision making were key components of the joint programmes in **Nicaragua** and **Occupied Palestinian Territory**.

Gender responsive budgets are an important means to support the realization of gender equality through public financial management systems. In order to introduce policy changes to mainstream gender in budgeting systems, this was also addressed in some programmes with varying degrees of success. Gender-responsive budgets were featured in the joint programmes in **Algeria, Bangladesh, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, and Timor-Leste**.

Another thematic issue that was addressed in some of the joint programmes is the fundamental importance for women and adolescent girls to control their own fertility. A critical aspect, therefore, in promoting GEWE is by ensuring the exercise of their reproductive rights. It is well known that reproductive health problems constitute a major cause of maternal mortality and morbidity in developing countries. Millennium Development Goal 5 therefore aims to improve maternal health by achieving universal access to reproductive health services, among other things. Moreover, the failure to provide information, education and services to help women protect their reproductive health is a violation of their rights to life and to health. **Ethiopia's** programme, "Leave no women behind" focused on improving access to and demand for quality, gender sensitive and integrated reproductive health care, including HIV/AIDS prevention services at all levels. In **Namibia** the aim of the multifaceted programme focused on increasing awareness and capacity to empower women and girls to exercise their rights including by ensuring their access to reproductive health services.

D. Approaches and Interventions

The joint programmes used a number of approaches and interventions to achieve results mainly through: 1. capacity development; 2. legislative and policy frameworks (including gender-responsive budgeting); 3. advocacy and communication (including sensitization, awareness raising and knowledge creation); and, 4. establishment of networks and mechanisms. Diverse approaches and interventions were applied at different levels ranging from strategies to improve and implement national laws and policies (e.g. **Namibia and Vietnam**), which were found in the vast majority of joint programmes, to capacity building interventions at the local level targeting municipalities and local government bodies (e.g. **Bolivia and Nicaragua**). Interventions were also directed at the individual level by working directly with the intended beneficiaries to strengthen their capacity to claim and exercise their human rights (e.g. **Bolivia, Guatemala, and Ethiopia**). Addressing the specific needs of the beneficiaries through simple interventions was an effective intervention in several programmes, such as in **Bolivia and Ethiopia**, which included providing support to livelihoods.

Capacity development: Capacity building of both duty-bearers and rights-holders was selected as a key intervention in all the programmes as a means to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls. (This is discussed in detail in the section below under Achievements and Results.) The primary focus of most interventions was on capacity building of duty-bearers in particular, at all levels,

⁹ Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations – In-depth study on all forms of violence against women, A/61/122/Add.I 6 July 2006.

as well as on institutional building. This frequently included some form of training and the training of trainers (TOT) was a common activity found in many of the programmes. Increasing capacity and awareness-raising of duty-bearers were used to enable them to safeguard women and girls from GBV and to address diverse thematic areas. In **Bangladesh**, for example, the programme reached out to enlist the support of journalists, employers, trade union leaders, judges and prosecutors, religious leaders and others, through training and advocacy efforts. Capacity development of rights-holders was also a primary intervention that was directed at the economic, educational and political empowerment of marginalized women, for example. This was the approach taken in **Bolivia, Guatemala, Ethiopia** and others.

Institutional capacity building was the focus of the interventions for some of the joint programmes such as in **Bolivia, Brazil and Vietnam**. In **Bolivia**, the programme aimed to create an enabling institutional environment to empower women to exercise their rights by raising awareness among key staff in municipalities and national governmental bodies to ensure that women's civil rights are respected and protected. In **Brazil** efforts were directed at strengthening the capacity of local and regional governmental bodies in order to promote gender equality and combat racial discrimination. The joint programme in **Vietnam** focused primarily on building institutional capacity at the central government level in order to strengthen reporting, gender analysis, sex disaggregated data collection and monitoring, among other things.

Legislative and policy frameworks: A fundamental strategy for achieving gender equality is by strengthening national laws and policies to ensure that **all** women exercise **all** their human rights as recognized in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Moreover, gender equality calls for the elimination of discrimination in accordance with inter alia, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and other relevant international and regional human rights treaties.¹⁰ For the most part, the joint programmes specifically refer to the international human rights framework, and particularly to CEDAW. This reference is explicitly found in all the joint programmes in Latin America, as well as in those of other regions (e.g. **Algeria, Bangladesh and Vietnam**). In sum, the joint programmes were all in accordance with the international human rights standards and principles.¹¹

A number of joint programmes (8) were designed to improve policy and legal frameworks to address gender equality and specific gender issues such as GBV (e.g. **Bangladesh, Colombia, Morocco and Timor-Leste**).¹²

Advocacy and communication: Diverse activities were implemented to reach out to diverse populations groups at all levels of society, from ministers, parliamentarians, mayors and religious leaders, to professionals in a wide range of sectors including health, education, justice, and labour, and to numerous relevant actors at the local level. Different methods of communication were used including collaboration with members of the mass media, and using newspapers, radio, TV, Websites and social networks (e.g. Facebook and Twitter).

Establishment of networks and mechanisms: Some of the recorded achievements include newly formed networks and mechanisms that contribute to the realization of GEWE within their respective areas of concern. Examples were found in all three regions where joint programmes were implemented.

Some programme approaches were broad in their geographic scope with activities reaching a large number of stakeholders. This was the case of **Bangladesh** where the joint programme operated in 38 districts addressing the issue of GBV through diverse strategies directed at the policy and legal framework, changing behaviours related to violence, and protecting survivors of violence. Other programmes were narrower in their geographic scope and concentrated efforts in certain areas of the country. For example, in **Ethiopia** the joint programme operated in only two provinces (although it also targeted the national policy level) and reached a smaller population group. However, in this case it was noted that the beneficiaries had more direct access to the programme's activities and its significant impact has become evident to the implementing partners who are currently looking to replicate it in other provinces. Stakeholders involved in the implementation of the programme observed in particular that the beneficiaries had become "model mothers" by sending their children to school and were also participating for the first time in local councils and civil society organizations.¹³

¹⁰ All 13 countries where joint programmes were carried out have ratified the ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW and the CRC.

¹¹ According to the evaluations conducted of the joint programmes.

¹² Most of the evaluations examined whether the policies, laws and plans supported by the programmes were in line with human rights instruments aforementioned, particularly CEDAW.

¹³ According to a key informant interviewed for this study.

In some programmes approaches were top down such as those directed at strengthening laws and policies involving a number of governmental bodies at the central and national level (e.g. **Brazil, Guatemala, Namibia, Nicaragua, Vietnam**). Others included activities carried out at the grass-roots level by working closely with communities and civil society organizations. Examples of effective interventions at the community level were found in the joint programmes implemented in **Bolivia** and **Ethiopia**, in which emphasis was placed on empowering women at the individual level, as well as on behavior change. A majority of the programmes included activities aimed to increase women's access to and control of economic resources and called for concentrated efforts at local and community levels.

E. Beneficiaries and Stakeholders

Overall, the beneficiaries of the joint programmes can be classified into the following two categories: as rights-holders and as duty-bearers. The first group consists of rights-holders who generally belong to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups and must be empowered to exercise their rights, and mainly through capacity building. (These rights-holders are frequently subject to intersecting inequalities which is explained further below in Box 4.) The second group consists of duty-bearers, which includes a wide range of individuals/authorities and organizations with duties and responsibilities, who must be empowered as well to enable them to protect and fulfill the rights of the rights-holders. (It should be noted that all duty-bearers may also be regarded as rights-holders depending upon the circumstances):

1. **Rights-holders:** Most vulnerable population groups - women and girls living in poverty including indigenous women, women and girls affected by HIV/AIDS, adolescent girls, rural women, domestic workers, sex workers, and those belonging to discriminated ethnic groups (e.g. black and gypsy population). Boys were also included as beneficiaries in a few programmes.
2. **Duty-bearers:** Governmental authorities, national institutions, Members of Parliament, local elected officials, municipal leaders, religious leaders, community leaders, civil servants, police officers, social workers, journalists, health workers and others. Academia and civil society organizations were also targeted as beneficiaries.

Numerous beneficiaries and stakeholders (both duty-bearers and rights-holders) were targeted at all levels. A majority of the joint programmes involved the sectoral ministries and line ministries responsible for service provision, thereby reaching a large number of government officials including those working at local government level. In **Namibia**, for example, direct beneficiaries included parliamentarians and community leaders. Thus, these government authorities and leaders in their communities were regarded not only as the key duty-bearers with responsibilities to ensure the realization of gender equality but also as the targeted beneficiaries. In the activities and delivery of outputs, most programmes also counted on the participation of a large number of civil society partners including national institutions and academia.

Most of the programmes also targeted beneficiaries/rights-holders whose human rights were not respected and protected and largely belong to the most disadvantaged and excluded population groups. Consequently, several programmes in Latin America were directed specifically at indigenous women (**Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala and Brazil**), while **Brazil** and **Colombia** also focused on reaching the Afro population. Efforts in **Ethiopia** provided support to disadvantaged adolescent girls, women affected by HIV/AIDS and others, particularly to ensure the exercise of their reproductive rights. Some programmes, such as in **Bolivia** and **Namibia**, targeted disadvantaged and excluded women and girls through life skills, food security, livelihoods and income generation schemes. In **Bangladesh** the joint programme also focused on prospective and returning migrant workers, as well as sex workers and other victims of violence. In **Vietnam**, survivors of domestic violence were reached directly through the programme.

Box 2: The average profile of the indigenous Bolivian woman.¹⁴

- A life expectancy of merely 51 years of age;
- Has been a wife and mother since she was 20 years old;
- Has attended primary school for three years but is barely able to read and write;
- Has given birth to five children of which two or three are still living;
- Works both to maintain her home but is also likely to engage in an outside activity such as agriculture or a small commercial business (e.g. selling artisanal products or services);
- Does not own the land that she cultivates or have any property in her name.

Boys and men were not always explicitly included as the primary targets in the original programme design, or as the intended beneficiaries to be regarded also as vulnerable rights-holders. In some instances (e.g. **Ethiopia**) men were reached as a consequence of the programme when they participated in literacy training which produced notable but “unexpected strategic benefits” to them and their wives (this aspect is explained in more detail later in the study).¹⁵ The **Bolivia** example shows that men were considered in terms of how they were “affected by the programme”. They were also viewed as having benefited from the newly acquired capacities and attitudes of the women targeted as the primary beneficiaries of the joint programme. At the same time, it was reported that attitudes on gender relations, GBV, women’s entitlements and rights changed among boys and men through awareness raising efforts supported by the programmes (e.g. **Algeria, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Occupied Palestinian Territory**). In **Bangladesh** men as beneficiaries were categorized as citizens who were reached through “awareness raising, the media and sensitization.”¹⁶ In **Vietnam** trafficked boys and men were addressed in situation analyses developed with the support of the joint programme and some specific interventions targeting men in order to raise their awareness of domestic violence were undertaken.

Men were targeted as beneficiaries primarily when they were acting as duty-bearers as, for example, government authorities, parliamentarians, community leaders, police officers, etc. The accountability of men as duty-bearers was addressed by some of the joint programmes through capacity building modalities such as awareness-raising of their role within the family, the division of household labor and particularly in regard to GBV. In **Ethiopia** the involvement of men in the community activities supported by the joint programme was deemed essential by those evaluating its overall progress. It was recognized that the engagement of men was most critical, particularly as the issues being discussed at the community level were relevant to both men and women, and considering that the men were the community leaders. Men participated unexpectedly in literacy training which helped not only to increase their own confidence but also acceptance of the joint programme. The programme had been designed originally to target mainly marginalized women and adolescent girls using community mobilization to build an enabling environment for girls and women. The unexpected participation of the men in the literacy training produced positive results that led to the community’s acceptance of the joint programme.

Some of the joint programmes specifically targeted men working in different sectors in order to increase their awareness and concern for gender related issues. In **Namibia**, law enforcement officers who were gender trained became more vigilant on matters concerning “baby dumping” and human trafficking. Parliamentarians participated in information sessions on the rights of women and girls. This was a means to increase their awareness and understanding of the accountability of lawmakers in regard to ensuring that the human rights of all people are respected and protected within the country. In **Nicaragua**, 300 men working in the health sector were trained on GBV which was deemed essential for improving gender relations. The need to raise awareness among youth and men in particular was underscored in some programmes.¹⁷

F. Specific Trends and Common Features

Some identifiable trends and common features were evident in the way the joint programmes were designed, and common themes and approaches/interventions selected for their implementation, as

¹⁴ As described in the Evaluation Reports of the joint programme in Bolivia

¹⁵ This point was made in the evaluation of the joint programme.

¹⁶ See Gender Monitoring Report for Bangladesh, under Beneficiaries

¹⁷ The Mid-Term Evaluation in Bangladesh underscored this point.

well as in the results/outcomes.¹⁸ In regard to trends in results, there was a notable increase in political will in support of the achievement of MDG 3 and GEWE that can be traced as outcomes of the joint programmes. All the joint programmes involved a wide range of partners and the application of a multidisciplinary, multi-sectoral approach, which represented in many cases the first collective collaborative effort between the UN system and national counterparts to address GEWE and GBV in particular. Capacity building was a primary intervention in all the programmes targeting both rights-holders and duty-bearers. Common beneficiaries were also found in many programmes with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged population groups targeted, based on the findings of baseline surveys and situation analyses.

Some highlights of the trends and common features follow:

Increase in political will towards MDG 3 and GEWE

1. All joint programmes significantly contributed to greater awareness and knowledge among a wide range of rights-holders and duty-bearers about GEWE in the countries where they were carried out.
2. Virtually all joint programmes were deemed to contribute towards the achievement of MDG 3.
3. The political recognition by many stakeholders participating in the joint programmes of the importance of GEWE as a means to achieve the MDGs.
4. The importance of creating an enabling environment to promote and protect women's and girls' human rights, particularly in light of the interrelationship between gender equality, poverty reduction and sustainable growth.
5. The importance of ending GBV as a precondition to the realization of gender equality and the recognition that duty-bearers have responsibilities in this regard.

Multi-sector approach used

6. All the joint programmes involved a wide range of partners and the application of a multidisciplinary, multi-sector approach. Since gender cuts across sectors and interests, there is a need for inputs into policy-making from all ministries and sectors in order to achieve sustainability. Otherwise, when there is a single ministry devoted to women or gender, some concerns can be isolated if there are weak links with the other sectors or ministries.
7. All joint programmes involved a number of sectoral ministries as implementing partners (most commonly the Ministries of Education, Health, Labour, Women and Children's Affairs, Social Protection, Justice, Agricultural and Rural Development) in order to mainstream gender issues into the various sectors. Five involved the Ministry of Finance (e.g. **Algeria, Ethiopia, Morocco, Nicaragua and Timor-Leste**), and four the Ministry of Planning, (e.g. **Algeria, Colombia, Namibia, and Occupied Palestinian Territory**).

Capacity development as a primary intervention

8. All of the joint programmes were designed to include some form of capacity development and training activities of rights-holders and duty-bearers.
9. Promoting the realization of gender equality at the local level through capacity building of local government and community groups was a noteworthy approach in several of the joint programmes (e.g. **Bolivia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Morocco**).

Common themes and beneficiaries

10. GBV was selected as a major area of focus in all three geographic regions where the joint programmes were carried out. Female genital cutting was addressed specifically in two countries, **Colombia and Ethiopia**.
11. Four of the five joint programmes in Latin America focused on empowering indigenous populations and other excluded groups (e.g. **Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala**).
12. Protecting the human rights of women and girls was a common theme in virtually all the programmes.

¹⁸ These trends were highlighted either in the evaluations or in the interviews conducted for this study.

13. Men as vulnerable rights-holders were included as beneficiaries in a few of the joint programmes (e.g. **Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Vietnam**) but they were not the major target beneficiaries. For the most part, men were targeted in their role as duty-bearers.

Common design and overall aims

14. Striving to achieve social change was inherent in all the joint programmes.
15. Aligning the outcomes with national priorities was underscored in all joint programmes, which were also designed in accordance with the UNDAF and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action. In many cases outcomes were aligned with issues that the international community has made a higher priority (such as GBV) and are subsequently being given greater attention by national governments.

II. ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY RESULTS

The most significant achievement/result that was apparent in virtually all the joint programmes reviewed for this study was the progress made towards MDG 3. This was made possible primarily from the collective efforts to foster political will, build capacity at all levels, and raise awareness to bring about significant transformation in the society. Striving to achieve social change was inherent in all the joint programmes and all of them were designed to obtain results from some form of capacity development.¹⁹

This section addresses the achievements and results of the joint programmes taking into account the notion of social change and using the components of the UNDP Capacity Development framework, which are outlined below. There is a clear link between bringing about social change and building capacities of a wide range of actors at all levels in order to obtain societal transformation particularly in the attitudes and behaviors of individuals. According to UNDP, “the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other international and national development targets hinges on capacities of individuals, organizations and societies to transform, in order to reach their development objectives.”²⁰

For the most part, the programmes were envisaged to help bring about positive social change in the lives of the rights-holders/participants/beneficiaries and, at the same time, build the capacity of the duty-bearers at all levels to fulfill their corresponding duties and obligations. Social change was visualized and anticipated in the design and planning phase of the joint programmes, which called for multi-stakeholder collaboration and a multi-sectoral approach, thereby constituting a collective effort to transform the attitudes and behavior within the society. The notion of social change was generally based on a set of assumptions and the identification of conditions that need to occur to bring about such transformations in the society. Therefore, in all of the joint programmes, regardless of the thematic area being covered, specific examples can be found of the way social change was achieved in terms of behavior and attitudes among the beneficiaries, both rights-holders and duty-bearers.

UNDP defines capacity development as “the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time.” UNDP and the UNDG Executive Committee explain that capacity development is “much more than supporting training programmes and the use of national expertise” and that it must also include “response and support strategies for accountable leadership, investments in long-term education and learning, strengthened public systems and voice mechanisms between citizen and state and institutional reform that ensure a responsive public and private sector that manages and delivers services to those who need them most.”²¹

UNDP identifies three levels of capacity as: **the enabling environment, the organizational level and individual level**. The enabling environment refers to the existence of policies, legislation, social norms and power relations within any broader system/context, or society. At the organizational level it includes internal policies, arrangements, procedures and frameworks that allow an organization to deliver its mission/mandate. The individual level refers to the experience, knowledge and technical skills that are acquired by people. Within these three levels other factors must be taken into account, which are described in the UNDP Capacity Framework as follows:²²

¹⁹ This is evident in the mid-term and final evaluations.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 3

²¹ UNDP Practice Note: Capacity Development, 2008, p. 3

²² Ibid, p. 17

Institutional Arrangements: refers to policies, procedures and processes that governments establish in order to legislate, plan and manage and which are necessary for sustaining development efforts.

Leadership: refers to the ability to influence, inspire, and motivate people so as to foster change. It can be found in individuals, organizations, groups and communities or be caused by leadership activities such as civil service, education or judicial reform.

Knowledge: refers to the creation, absorption, management and diffusion of information and expertise transmitted through, for example, formal and informal education, adult literacy campaigns, communities of practice, the generation of data, studies and more.

Accountability: is based on duties and obligations of the duty-bearers and refers to the systems and mechanisms to ensure oversight and compliance with, for example, the rule of law. It includes the existence of governance bodies such as parliaments, the judiciary, ombudspersons, national human rights institutions and anti-corruption agencies. It may also include other means of monitoring compliance with rules and procedures.

Capacity development was carried out at all three levels aforementioned (enabling environment, organizational and individual) and these four aspects were taken into account in virtually all the approaches and interventions of the joint programmes and from the beginning in their design and plan for implementation. The bulk of the joint programmes were aimed at supporting institutional arrangements (policies, procedures and processes) and developing knowledge; while also contributing to fostering leadership and promoting accountability among the duty-bearers at all levels of society. At the same time, they focused on increasing the capacity of the rights-holders on an individual level to enable them to exercise all their rights.

As many as 10 joint programmes stated that the overall aim was to promote and protect the rights of women and girls. To achieve this goal, three main thematic areas were the primary focus: Gender-Based Violence, Economic and Political Empowerment of Women, and Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS. The interventions and approaches selected for the programmes fall into four categories:

1. Capacity development;
2. Legislative and policy frameworks, and gender-responsive budgeting;
3. Advocacy and communication (including sensitization, awareness raising and knowledge creation); and,
4. Establishment of networks and mechanisms.

The following sections highlight the achievements and approaches under these four major categories and also address the three main thematic areas aforementioned. It should be noted that in most cases there was a mix of approaches and interventions. As noted before, nearly all programmes tackled GBV and capacity building in its various forms (e.g. developing knowledge, institutional strengthening, fostering accountability) was a main feature in all programmes.

A. Capacity Development to Address Gender Based Violence (GBV)

Capacity development in its diverse forms was the major focus in all the joint programmes targeting both rights-holders and duty-bearers at all levels of society. To a large extent capacity building efforts tended to concentrate on the duty-bearers in order to improve their capacity to fulfill their duties and obligations. This called for focusing on a wide range of actors and authorities at all levels from government staff at ministry level, municipal leaders, parliamentarians, as well as religious leaders, to members of the media and numerous professionals in health, education, justice and other sectors. The basic objective, therefore, was to build their capacities on an individual level through diverse activities aimed at raising their awareness about GBV and understanding of the need to strengthen the legal and policy framework. Also addressed were social and individual attitudes, behaviours and root causes of violence. Ultimately, these activities would contribute to increase their overall accountability and thereby create a more enabling environment for ensuring the rights of women and girls and protecting them from GBV. To illustrate the diverse approaches undertaken to obtain results, the joint programmes in **Bangladesh, Colombia, Morocco, and Vietnam** are highlighted below.

Bangladesh, “Programme to Address Violence Against Women in Bangladesh”: Changing behaviors related to violence against women and girls was a major component of this programme which was designed to address GVB in a comprehensive manner. GBV is widespread in Bangladesh and occurs within the domestic and work environment. One of its root causes was identified as social and individual attitudes and behaviors. Emphasis was placed, therefore, on awareness-raising, sensitization, and capacity building. Some 23,986 people including journalists, employer, managers, trade union leaders, district officials, teachers, judges and prosecutors, members of sex workers network, and many others received awareness training on GBV. The training of elected Union Parishad Women members on women’s rights and GBV has already resulted in the prevention of 33 child marriages (known of and recorded), provision of support to 80 GBV survivors and the prevention of some harmful dowry practices. These interventions were further supported through complementary

strategies focusing on improving the policy and legal framework and ensuring existing laws are implemented, as well as on protecting survivors of GBV. Some examples are included later in this paper.²³

Colombia, “Integral Strategy for Prevention and Services regarding all Forms of Gender Based Violence”: The country has endured four decades of armed conflict and an ongoing battle against illegal drug trafficking. According to reports of UNHCR, Colombia has one of the largest numbers of internally displaced people. These difficult conditions have affected the society which has been continually exposed to high levels of violence throughout the country. Diverse forms of GBV are also widespread. Thus, the joint programme was aimed at all manifestations of domestic violence including sexual violence, human trafficking, violence caused by illegally armed individuals and harmful traditional practices. It focused on prevention of GBV, provision of care and assistance to victims, and the eradication of such violence. It also focused on developing a legal and policy framework able to respond to the needs of Colombian society. The programme contributed to the prevention, detection and monitoring of GBV, the improvement of services to GBV victims and the development of relevant laws and policies. Many of these efforts were directed in particular at indigenous and black women who frequently constitute a majority of the displaced population.

The joint programme was implemented at the national level and in four different regions of the country with notable results. There is reported evidence of an increase awareness of GBV among members of the media and in the political campaigns. New strategic alliances were formed which have brought together government institutions and civil society and new spaces and mechanisms for dialogue have been created. In all, the programme was able to strengthen the institutions responsible for prevention of GBV and the provision of services to victims. Particularly noteworthy is the strengthening of data collection systems and providing a solid body of evidence from which to develop public policies.

Another important result of the joint programme was the attention given for the first time to female genital cutting which was found to be a common practice among the Emberas communities. A pilot project was carried out in Risaralda within Emberas indigenous communities where it was recently discovered in 2007, when a little girl died from this harmful practice, that female genital cutting was being carried out by midwives. While efforts directed at the prohibition of this practice have been deemed effective, it is also understood that it will take time and require continuous support to obtain sustainable results. It should be noted that the joint programme in **Ethiopia** also addressed female genital cutting, a common harmful practice in many African countries, which not only constitutes a violation of women’s rights and is detrimental to their health but contributes to maternal mortality.

Morocco, “Programme to combat Gender Based Violence by strengthening the status of women and girls in Morocco”: According to a recent national study, the prevalence of GBV is high and common nationwide. The joint programme focused on promoting women’s rights and the eradication of GBV using a comprehensive multifaceted approach. Diverse interventions included capacity building, strengthening laws and policies, advocacy and communication, as well as the production of a wide range of studies, surveys and other programming tools. As a result of the programme, penal laws were improved to protect women and children, women and girls were reportedly empowered as actors of development, women’s rights were integrated in policies and programs of local government, and a range of social services (e.g. health, justice, police) in 6 regions were established for victims of violence. See also Box 3 below.

BOX 3: Morocco TAMKINE Model of Multi-Sectoral Approach to GBV

The joint programme TAMKINE was designed to prevent and protect women and girls from all forms of violence and empower them through the institutionalization of gender and women’s human rights in national policies and development programmes, as well as at the regional and local level. A “theory of change” was applied in structuring the pioneering programme using five key elements: gender, governance, multi-sectoral participation, territorialisation of objectives depending on specific needs, and partnerships with civil society. Addressing governance issues was a key factor for its success and the partnerships that were established between 13 ministerial departments 8 UN Agencies and the civil society represented by 40 NGOs. A study of the Tamkine model points out that “Partnership and governance thus give shape and sense to the socio-political mechanism, making the decision-making processes and symbolic acculturation processes of the programme more flexible and

²³ It was the largest programme to be carried out in the country in terms of number of partners with a total of 9 UN Agencies and 11 national counterparts and a budget of 8 million dollars.

relevant.”²⁴ The same study recommends that in order to replicate such a programme, it should be based on the following 10 characteristics:²⁵

1. An international intention into orientations and resources.
2. A favourable national context.
3. A common project for change.
4. Underlying concepts which must be strong, meaningful and shared.
5. Leadership built on governance.
6. Highly technical programme piloting.
7. Strengthened, legitimate coordination with added value.
8. Institutionalised multi-sectoral organizations.
9. Levels of sharing of decisions and actions.
10. A programme organized as an autonomous sustainable system.

Vietnam, “Joint Programme on Gender Equality in Vietnam”: Despite a sound policy and legal framework, institutional weakness was one of the problems identified in the joint programme which also addressed GBV. Capacity building was needed in the area of reporting, gender analysis, data collection and monitoring which were considered weak and unsystematic, particularly in terms of addressing gender issues. A capacity assessment of government counterparts was carried out with support of the joint programme which noted that most training results carried out to date (2009) could be strengthened. Support was provided to build national institutional capacity which succeeded in improving skills, knowledge and practices of the duty-bearers at the central, provincial and local levels. Thus, capacity for implementing, monitoring, evaluating and reporting processes regarding the Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention were all improved.

B. Legislative and Policy Frameworks and Gender Responsive Budgeting for GEWE

Improved laws and policies and gender responsive budgeting are fundamental pillars for making further progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE). A sound legal and policy framework provides a foundation from which to guarantee gender equality and allows for combating discrimination, both *de jure* and *de facto*, demanding equal opportunity and holding the relevant authorities accountable. To achieve this it requires organizational or institutional capacity to enact, modify and implement the laws and policies required to safeguard women’s rights and establish protective measures for all forms of violence. This calls for mainstreaming gender in the formulation and implementation of national and local policies, plans and budgets. It also calls for targeting the lawmakers such as parliamentarians and other key actors involved in policy-making, as well as those duty-bearers responsible for implementing the pertinent laws and policies. In addition, it requires skills and knowledge for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the existing laws and policies and gender-responsive budgets.²⁶

The joint programmes that aimed primarily at capacity building of duty-bearers and supporting “institutional arrangements” (laws, policies, procedures and processes) at the organizational level, produced notable achievements that were measured by both quantitative and qualitative indicators. In most of the countries there were a number of newly adopted or amended laws, and a wide range of policies and mechanisms developed. It is expected that these results will ultimately contribute towards the realization of GEWE. Some highlights of the results reported in 7 joint programmes, in **Bangladesh, Brazil, Guatemala, Namibia, Nicaragua, Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Timor-Leste** are highlighted below.

In **Bangladesh**, the main interventions were aimed at strengthening the pertinent laws and policies and promoting their implementation. As a result, the National Women Development Policy, National Child Policy and National Labor Policy are now reportedly in line with CEDAW and therefore, *de jure* discrimination has been eliminated in these specific areas. Sensitization activities of the joint programme improved enforcement of the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, Domestic Violence Act 2010, Suppression of GBV and Children Act 2003, and High Court Directives on Sexual Harassment. To stop GBV in the work-place, support was provided for the implementation of the Labor Act 2006 and National Action Plan on GBV. In regard to the economic empowerment of women, support was

²⁴ Modelling of the Joint Multi-Sectorial MDG-F “Gender” Programme for International Transfer, Modelling based on the identified model of the Moroccan Tamkine programme, MDG Achievement Fund, UN Women, Morocco’s Ministry of Social Development of Family and Solidarity, 2011

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Gender responsive budgeting involves developing methods and tools to facilitate analysis of public expenditure in order to make adjustments of a national or local budget from a gender perspective.

provided to advocacy activities based on the National Skills Development Policy and the Strategic Plan on Gender Mainstreaming in TVET system.

Brazil, “Inter-Agency Programme for the Promotion of Gender, Racial and Ethnic Equality”:

Brazil is currently an economic power and ranked as a medium income country with developed institutions and an active civil society. In this context, the joint programme concentrated on supporting laws, policies and action plans in order to promote gender, racial and ethnic equality, and on capacity building of government counterparts and civil society organizations. This was in accordance with the Government’s priorities as established in the national development plans. An important achievement was strengthening the capacity of the Special Secretariat for Women’s Policies (SPM) and the Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Policies on Racial Equality (SEPPIR) to ensure gender and racial perspectives in all policies, programmes and public services. A specific outcome was the development of a methodology for monitoring the SEPPIR Action Plan. In addition, strategies were also directed at strengthening capacity of local government, promoting the participation of women in decision-making (particularly black women and those belonging to ethnic minorities), and raising awareness of these issues through communication activities.

Guatemala, “Strengthening Governance Institutions for Guatemalan Women”: The joint programme set out to promote GEWE through institutional capacity building in order to strengthen both national and local government policies regarding women. Gender issues of concern were identified such as women’s low economic status, the high incidences of GBV, discrimination and racism suffered by women, and the strong barriers that exist at both national and local level which prevent the participation of women in decision making processes. A situation analysis underscored the prevalence of violence in the country, which has a high incidence of femicide and where women have one of the lowest levels of political participation in Latin America (17%).²⁷ In response, the joint programme was aimed at institutional strengthening in order to address these issues at both national and local level. The programme also aimed at the implementation of the National Policy for the Promotion and Development of Women (PNPDIM) and the Policy for Equal Opportunity (PEO) 2008-2023. To achieve this it strengthened the capacity of the Presidential Secretary for Women (SEPREM) and the Office in Defense of Indigenous Women (DEMI). These efforts enabled the integration of the PNPDIM in government planning and in the budgets of state entities.

The joint programme produced specific results including:

- integration of the national policy by 8 Ministries and Secretaries (e.g. Education, Health, Economy, Labour, Agriculture, and Finance) and the adoption of formal agreements to promote GEWE between SEPREM and the ministries;
- application of the Manual for Institutionalization to assist public institutions in developing processes for self-evaluation that include gender and racial perspectives;
- strengthening the Women’s Commission in the National Congress and the Women’s Secretaries of the political parties; and,
- significant increase in the national budget for SEPREM, which is expected to ensure its continuity and sustainability.

Namibia, “Setting things right towards Gender Equality and Equity”: This comprehensive and multifaceted programme reached across national, regional and community levels in order to increase awareness and capacity to ensure the exercise of women and girls’ rights (including reproductive rights). It was the first initiative in Namibia to bring the UN Agencies and government counterparts together to focus on gender in a collective manner. The joint programme contributed to mainstreaming gender in the national development frameworks through the formulation of key instruments and policy documents such as the National Gender Policy, the National Gender Plan of Action and National Gender-Based Violence Plan of Action. It made a significant contribution in the area of law enforcement by strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Safety and Security to respond to cases of GBV through 8 specialized law enforcement units, the Women and Child Protection Units, and training of police officers. Gender budgeting analysis of select government ministries - the Youth, Trade and Industry, Safety and Security, Justice and Lands - was carried out and 40 government ministerial staff and 26 management staff from the Ministry of Justice were trained in gender responsive budgeting. The availability of sex disaggregated data was achieved through the training of the Central Bureau of Statistics and others. A total of 130 staff was trained on GBV data capturing and analysis.

Nicaragua, “From Rhetoric to Reality: Toward Gender Equity and Women’s Empowerment through Participation and Gender Responsive Budgets”: Despite notable government efforts to

²⁷ According to the Mid-Term Evaluation.

reduce poverty and make progress towards the realization of gender equality, there remain many challenges for women living in a predominantly “machista” and patriarchal society like Nicaragua. Therefore, the joint programme was designed to support the Government in fulfilling its commitments to promote gender equality and allocate resources to ensure the participation of women in decision-making processes within the economic, social and political domains at both national and municipal level. This was to be achieved by: building the capacity of women in 15 municipalities in order to empower them by ensuring their participation in decision making; mainstreaming gender in the formulation and implementation of municipal development plans and budgets for achieving results; and, mainstreaming gender in national policies and national budgets, particularly those of the Ministries of Health and Labor. These interventions would also contribute toward ensuring women the exercise of their human rights, economic empowerment and decrease GBV.

Municipalities have taken action by preparing gender-responsive budgets and financing projects managed by women that benefit their families. Eight municipal gender policies have been adopted which include the roles and functions of local institutions. (Similarly, the Ministries aforementioned are developing gender-responsive budgets.) There is reportedly a growing commitment on behalf of the mayors to promote gender equality, the inclusion of women’s concerns and projects in the 15 municipalities targeted by the joint programme, as well as an increase in the participation of women in community consultation and decision-making processes. For example, an estimated 113,814 women were mobilized and consulted for the formulation of gender responsive budgets and local gender policies, and 23,098 women participated in local government decision-making processes regarding the financing of their income generating projects. Also the lives of some 9,728 women were improved by empowering them to submit their claims which were subsequently addressed by the municipality. These positive developments at the municipal level led to gender mainstreaming in the national budget (Presupuesto General de la República and Presupuesto de Mediano Plazo) and establishing institutional measures such as creating gender units in national government commissions, among other results.

Occupied Palestinian Territory, “Gender Equality – Social, Political and Economic in the OPT”:

This joint programme is a good example of capacity development focusing on achieving results at the highest policy level or macro level. The overall aim was to promote GEWE and address specific gender issues through improved policies, frameworks and protection systems. To this end, the programme focused on GBV, the representation of women in decision-making bodies and enhancing economic opportunities for women. This was to be achieved through the development of laws and policies, new mechanisms, tools and resources. Key results include a National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women, the formation of a Gender Audit Team, and a National Women’s Employment Committee, which is expected to lead to the formulation and adoption of policies related to the economic empowerment of women.

Timor-Leste, “Supporting Gender Equality and Women’s Human Rights in Nation-building of Timor-Leste”: The programme focused on improving the conditions of women and girls through the protection of their rights and their empowerment by establishing legal frameworks and mechanisms to uphold their rights and reduce their vulnerability. The programme identified five types of results that were expected to be achieved. They were improvements in: the laws, government plans and budgets; capacities of government and NGOs; public awareness; and, the quality of social services. A combination of these improvements was expected to lead towards progress related to the social and economic situation of women and girls. The primary beneficiaries were mostly government officials, representatives of local government and NGOs, although the “ultimate beneficiaries were vulnerable women and girls” in the five programme districts. One of the major achievements was the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence which was approved by the Council of Ministers on 29 May 2012.

It is worth noting that the Government of Timor-Leste ratified CEDAW in 2003 and submitted its first state party report to the CEDAW monitoring body in July 2009. The country’s ratification of CEDAW and its participation in the human rights treaty reporting process represent significant signs of change at the highest level that should ultimately contribute to improve the status of women in Timor-Leste.

C. Advocacy and Communication

Advocacy and communication was an important component of all the joint programmes although they did not all identify a communication and advocacy strategy as such. Numerous activities were carried out in order to enlist the support of the duty-bearers for GEWE, enhance partnerships and raise awareness of women’s rights at all levels of society. To this end the joint programmes collaborated with media organizations (using for example, newspapers, radio, television, web pages and social networks), civil society organizations, academic institutions and numerous other stakeholders focusing on gender issues. All the joint programmes also concentrated their efforts on increasing awareness and knowledge through the creation, absorption, management and diffusion of information

and expertise as a means to bring about change with specific results at the policy level. This was achieved through, for example, the development of studies and policy papers, and diverse tools and training materials. It also included training of trainers and setting up new mechanisms and taskforces, all of which are expected to lead to significant social changes in the society. Overall, the increase in knowledge and the communication and advocacy activities contributed to raise awareness on gender equality and domestic violence among the general public, as well as the duty-bearers at national and local levels. Concrete gains were reported in terms of increased awareness on MDG 3 related issues among citizens and governments as a result of media outreach and advocacy. Some highlights follow below.

Communication and advocacy activities: A good example of advocacy efforts to enlist the support of key duty-bearers was evident in **Vietnam**. Field visits by Members of Parliament to four regions were made possible by the joint programme. Subsequently, the parliamentarians raised issues of concern within the communities in Parliament in order to hold line ministries accountable. Diverse topics were raised such as poor maternal health, low health budget allocations, inadequate medical supplies to hospitals, poor accommodations for medical staff and GBV. In **Nicaragua**, mayors were mobilized by the joint programme and demonstrated their growing commitment and accountability by ensuring women greater access to health and reproductive health services and to prevention and services in relation to GBV. The political commitment of the **Guatemalan** ministries at the highest level demonstrated by the adoption of official agreements (*convenios*) was evidence of key authorities assuming responsibility to ensure that gender equality and gender issues are treated as a top priority. In addition, the mayors in Guatemala provided an office and salaries for the Women's Office as a means to sustain results achieved in their communities.

Using the media to reach out to citizens was another important awareness raising intervention that was part of the advocacy and communication strategy. In **Timor-Leste** a campaign on GBV was conducted with a total of 81 awareness raising events including 26 newspaper articles, 2 television programmes and 5 national radio programmes. A total of 68,500 information materials were developed and disseminated carrying messages on GBV, child protection and human trafficking. In **Bangladesh** a 16 Days Awareness Campaign on GBV was organized nationwide through coordinated efforts involving for the first time UN Agencies and Government Ministries. An innovative initiative was carried out in **Brazil** in which a seminar, "Black women to combat racial discrimination in mass communication," led to the creation of a Network of Women for the Northeast of the country that was subsequently linked to the Latin American Federation of Journalists. In this regard the campaign, "Campanha Mais mulheres no Poder" carried out with civil society to enlist more women with decision-making power deserves mention; considering that the programme concentrated primarily on building capacities of public officials and institutional strengthening of national machinery on gender and race. Capacity building activities also included training members of the media to raise their awareness and encourage them to use communication tools such as social networks, blogs, Facebook and Twitter.

Also noteworthy is the communication and advocacy strategy supported by the joint programme in **Occupied Palestinian Territory** that included a wide range of activities and products such as a brochure, website, 8 episodes on the Palestinian national TV, SMS, newsletter, radio spots, and billboards. In addition, the programme included holding the first female football match that received media attention and a senior journalist seminar to raise awareness on gender issues.

Training activities: All of the joint programmes included some form of training which varied from formal capacity building initiatives to holding information sessions as a means to promote gender equality and to protect the rights of women and girls. These interventions involved a wide range of specific rights-holders and duty-bearers. For example, in **Namibia** it included Parliamentarians, National Council Members, Ministerial staff, paralegals, community volunteers and others at all levels of society. It also included gender-budgeting training for 40 ministry staff and training in agricultural activities for 374 female heads of households and 64 agricultural extension officers and community leaders. In **Bangladesh** capacity building and awareness-raising regarding CEDAW involved government officials, judges and students, while also supporting the NGO shadow report on the implementation of this human rights treaty. Nearly 2,000 religious leaders and "female religious minded women" were trained on GBV, as their potential role in prevention and awareness raising was recognized as important. It also included 15 training sessions with the National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE) and 24 sessions with the Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF) and the NCCWE for employers, managers, supervisors and workers. As a result, GBV has been included in the Trade Union Campaign of NCCWE, and the BEF has committed to develop and enforce the relevant policies in order to address sexual harassment and other forms of violence in the workplace.

Development and dissemination of information, studies, tools and training materials:

In **Algeria**, the “**Joint Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women**”, focused on improving the quality of information on gender and strengthening institutional capacities at the national level in order to address pertinent issues concerning women in the social and economic domains. It was also aimed at improving employment opportunities for women, particularly rural and vulnerable women, and increasing their access to decent work. Thus, improving the image of working women and strengthening social values based on equity and equality through broad dissemination of gender sensitive information and by involving the media and civil society was another major objective. In this context a major survey was carried out reaching 9,000 households in order to assess how women use their time and to make women’s work both within the family and outside of their homes more visible. Particularly noteworthy was the creation of “pilot information centers” designed to support women with their micro-credit projects in different regions of the country which reportedly contributed to their sustainability. Another important achievement is the gender audit that was carried out in three Ministries which was the first of its kind. The key findings can be found in a comprehensive report “Rapport d’Audit Genre,” which also provides a good overview of the status of women in Algeria.

In **Occupied Palestinian Territory**, the programme produced a number of studies, policy papers, surveys and training manuals. A Study on Women’s Cooperatives entitled “Mainstreaming Gender Equality Concerns in Palestinian Cooperatives” is noted as a major achievement. The study is expected to lead to specific capacity building proposals that will contribute towards strengthening women’s cooperatives. A survey on violence against women in the work area, the first of its kind, was developed and a Help Line was created that operates 7 days per week and 16 hours per day. As a direct result of the joint programme, six ministries are now working together to implement the National Strategy to combat GBV.

In **Vietnam**, the joint programme contributed significantly to raising awareness and knowledge dissemination on GBV in the country. The National Study on Domestic Violence provided for the first time robust data of the problem and helped to clarify misconceptions about GBV as occurring mainly among the poor and marginalized groups. The study raised the issue to a new level of discussion and the evidence influenced a national policy dialogue on this subject. Consequently, some persistent discriminatory attitudes and behavior against women such as son preference as evidenced by the rising sex ratio at birth can now be more openly addressed in Vietnam.

Another notable result is the increased availability of evidence-based gender data and strengthened data systems. The Set of National Statistical Indicator on Gender Development, developed with support from the joint programme and approved by the Prime Minister in 2011, provides a legal framework for the regular collection of gender data in various sectors including economy, labour, education, culture, family, population and health. The first ever national study on domestic violence against women provides data on the prevalence of GBV in the country which is now acknowledged to be a serious problem.

D. Establishment of New Networks and Mechanisms

The numerous activities generated by the joint programmes with the involvement of a wide range of partners also led to the establishment of new networks and mechanisms that contribute to raising awareness and increasing understanding of GEWE. Some highlights follow:

- The legal establishment of the Sex Workers Network in **Bangladesh** which allows them to advocate for their rights.
- In **Brazil**, as a result of advocacy efforts supported by the joint programme, the Red de Mujeres del Noreste (Network of Women of the Northeast) was established and became associated with the Federation of Women Journalists for Latin America.
- In **Guatemala**, the Instituto Autonomo de Formación Política de Mujeres Indígenas (an independent institute for capacity building of indigenous women) was designed and a number of tools were provided for its creation. This included a political and communication strategy to empower 35 women identified with potential for elective office in several regions of the country.
- In **Ethiopia**, for the first time in two regions, Women’s Savings and Credit cooperatives were formed.
- In **Namibia** the joint programme equipped and furnished 8 specialized law enforcement units to respond to GVB appropriately through gender training.
- The creation of a network of promoters of gender who are trainers of municipal trainers and provide assistance and support in **Nicaragua**.

- A Gender Audit Team and a National Women’s Employment Committee were established in the **Occupied Palestinian Territory**.
- A National Women’s Employment Committee was established in **Vietnam**.

E. Economic and Political Empowerment of Women

As noted earlier, all the joint programmes were designed with specific expected outcomes that would build capacity on different levels (enabling environment, organizational, individual) and would ultimately contribute to GEWE. As many as 9 joint programmes focused on the economic and political empowerment of women through diverse interventions directed at the individual level.

It should be borne in mind that Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) stressed “women’s active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making.” Moreover, it is widely recognized that the best way to reduce poverty is to give women the opportunity to earn a livelihood by affording them access to resources, employment, and markets.

In many parts of the world gender equality is undermined from the lack of women’s access to resources, rights and entitlements, as well as from patterns of gender, racial, and multiple forms of discrimination. (See Box 4 below on “intersectionality”) Consequently, many women continue to face social barriers and legal obstacles to, *inter alia*, own and inherit property, to obtain access to credit, to obtain decent work and equal pay and be free from discrimination and violence in the workplace. In addition, they are frequently denied equal opportunity to engage in decision-making processes, participate fully in the political processes and hold public office. Some of the joint programmes that focused primarily on addressing this important area, **Bolivia, Guatemala, Ethiopia, Namibia, Nicaragua and Occupied Palestinian Territory**, are highlighted below.

Bolivia, “Joint Programme ‘Semilla’ (means seed in Spanish), Productive Patrimony and Citizenship Status of Women in Extreme Poverty”: This is a good example of a programme focused on increasing the economic empowerment of the most disadvantaged and excluded women. Thus, significant and visible signs of change were achieved in the empowerment of indigenous women through the support provided for income generating activities.²⁸ Financial assistance (each individual received approximately the sum of US\$ 1,000) was provided to disadvantaged indigenous women to enable them to engage in income generating activities primarily in agriculture, cattle raising, and raising small animals. Many women became involved in the production of cheese, milk, breads and various artisanal products. About 5,183 received technical training in order to increase their management and production skills. These activities improved the lives of an estimated 4,640 women by increasing their incomes and enabling them to support their families and reach a certain level of economic independence. Due to the support received from the joint programme, the women targeted continue building their businesses and generating income.²⁹

At the same time, the indigenous women targeted were further empowered by the training they received through citizenship education that focused on their human rights, particularly their rights to an identity and to own property. A key objective was assisting them to obtain their personal identification cards and titles to their land or home. An estimated 12,817 women obtained either a birth certificate or an official identity card. Emphasis was also placed on women’s economic rights, on their right to participate in decision making processes, their right to access information and to public and private spaces for negotiation as small business owners. In sum, the programme responded to the multiple forms of discrimination faced by indigenous women in Bolivia – as women, living in poverty and being indigenous, which are the root cause of their exclusion and inequality.

BOX 4 : “Intersectionality” addressed in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, and Guatemala

Intersectionality is a concept based on the understanding that women do not experience discrimination and other forms of human rights violations solely on the grounds of gender, but for multiple reasons. They may be victims of other forms of discrimination such as their ethnicity, race, age, caste, class status, health status, disability, and sexual orientation. Intersectionality addresses the way that policies and practices operate together to further disempower women. The Beijing Declaration calls for Governments to “Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people.” The multiple forms of discrimination against certain population groups result in perpetuating their exclusion and poverty. Thus, an in-depth analysis of

²⁸ Pointed out during the focus group discussions as part of the evaluation.

²⁹ As reported in the Final Evaluation of the joint programme.

historical, political and social contexts and of the intersection of discriminatory grounds involved helps to identify more effective programme strategies and policies.

The triple discrimination and marginalization faced by indigenous or black women (from being women, indigenous or black and living in poverty) in some countries of Latin America was addressed by the joint programmes carried out in several countries which helped to increase awareness about their particularly low socio-economic status. The programme in **Bolivia** targeted indigenous women as the primary beneficiaries and provided them with support for income generating activities. In **Brazil** and **Colombia**, the programmes raised awareness about gender, racial and ethnic discrimination affecting certain population groups, primarily indigenous women and black women.

In **Guatemala**, a most significant visible achievement reported was the large number of women, particularly indigenous and rural women, found participating in decision-making processes in the social, political, and economic domains at municipal, regional and national levels. Most importantly, there was evidence of a significant increase in the political will to support the Presidential Secretary for Women (SEPREM) and the Office in Defense of Indigenous Women (DEMI). This resulted in greater commitment and capacity to respond to women's needs by providing credit and technical assistance to small businesses run by women.

Ethiopia, "Leaving No Women Behind": This joint programme is a good example that shows how simple interventions can make a difference in the lives of the targeted beneficiaries. The programme was designed to benefit 250,000 people of which 100,000 were adolescent girls and women. Interventions included training on health and hygiene, literacy, reproductive health and other life skills. Significant behavioral change was found at individual and community levels where the impact of the interventions was deemed to be more direct and effective. One of the main achievements was improving livelihood opportunities through capacity building and by providing access to credit. Consequently, women's access and ownership of resources (including food security) improved the status of women in the community and increased their participation in the public sphere. It also increased the participation of women in decision-making related to women's cooperatives, and in two regions Women's Savings and Credit cooperatives were formed for the first time.

Box 5: Evidence of Behaviour Change in Ethiopia³⁰

The programme outcomes which focused on promoting and protecting the human rights of adolescent girls and women and on their empowerment led to significant behavior change:

- Among illiterate adolescents and women who received literacy and life skills there was significant improvement in raising their self-esteem.
- Community action to reduce harmful traditional practices such as child marriages and female genital mutilation, and reduce stigma and discrimination of women living with HIV/AIDS.
- Changes in gender roles and division of labor at household level which improved women's self-esteem and ultimately improved the status of women in the community.
- Increased adolescent girls' and women's knowledge of sexual and reproductive health issues through training and discussion groups led by health workers at the community level.
- Testimonies of changing gender roles and evidence of the community condemning violence against women were documented.
- Evidence of increased literacy levels among adolescent girls, women and men.
- There were visible signs of change in the women selected as the beneficiaries who had never received assistance in health or education and overall increase in demand for health services by the women, particularly family planning services.
- Women were observed taking the initiative to mobilize others in the community and becoming role model mothers by sending their children to school.

In **Namibia**, the joint programme contributed to the well-being and empowerment of poor female heads of households and other vulnerable women through the provision of skills and knowledge to produce food and generate income, as well as the provision of productive assets to women and girls (107 women). Initiatives included gardening and rearing small stocks of chickens, goats and cattle. Visible results from these interventions include improved health in children from the consumption of goat milk and adding fruits and vegetables to their diets.

In **Nicaragua**, important achievements were reported such as the improvement of women's lives through the financial resources directly provided to them including micro credit to carry out new income-generating activities (e.g. production of underwear, setting up restaurants, jewelry making, arts and crafts, food catering). Their lives were also improved through the provision of reproductive

³⁰ Based on the Mid-Term Evaluation Report and from interview with key informant for this study.

health services which benefited some 8,781 women. Vocational training was also provided to a number of women.

In **Occupied Palestinian Territory**, employment opportunities for low-income women and female graduates in refugee camps were increased through diverse skills training courses, the production of a Project Management Handbook, establishment of income-generating projects, as well as small business development training, and other efforts.

F. Reproductive Health

The human right as recognized in the major human rights instruments to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health includes reproductive health. As part of this right, all individuals, both male and female, must be able to control their sexual and reproductive health and make informed decisions regarding family planning. Ensuring the exercise of this right by all is fundamental for achieving GEWE. This right is closely linked to preventing child marriages, sexual violence, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Inherent in this human right is the principle of non-discrimination which implies that reproductive health services should be accessible to all, including adolescents and indigenous people. A few of the joint programmes, in **Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Namibia, and Nicaragua**, included activities that addressed the issue of reproductive health services and HIV/AIDS (e.g. information, education and counseling). Highlights follow below:

A situation assessment of HIV/AIDS infected/affected women was conducted in **Bangladesh** where there is increasing recognition that this and other sexually transmitted diseases are having a devastating impact on women's health, particularly on young women and adolescent girls subjected to sexual violence, trafficking and other forms of violence. Moreover, such violence places them at high risk of trauma, disease and unwanted pregnancy.

In **Ethiopia**, a baseline survey indicated that adolescent girls and women had limited reproductive health knowledge and girls between 15-19 years of age, were seven times more likely to be infected by HIV as compared to boys. Training on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and family planning services were supported by the joint programme. The increased knowledge by the women beneficiaries of reproductive health combined with reproductive health services have led to improved health behavior. Community conversation was one of the approaches that stimulated community dialogue and consciousness on HIV/AIDS and reproductive health issues. Communities gave testimonies of observable changed behavior among beneficiaries of the joint programme.

In **Namibia**, one of the main outcomes was increased awareness and capacity for protecting the rights of women and girls including reproductive rights. Namibia is one of the countries most affected by HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, despite more than 90 % of the population being aware of the disease and sexually transmitted infections. UNAIDS has identified gender inequality, GBV, HIV-related abuses of human rights, stigma and discrimination as the root causes that prevent people from seeking the information and services that will protect them from HIV infection, adopting safe behavior and accessing HIV treatment and care. In response, the joint programme focused on improving the quality, quantity and usage of services including reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment services through raised awareness and understanding by leaders, the media and the general population of gender issues. An estimated 76,494 people were trained on women's rights, reproductive rights and HIV/AIDS.

In 15 municipalities in **Nicaragua** there was an increase in the number of women having access to reproductive health services (estimated 8,781 women) and there were improved health services in terms of infrastructure and equipment, all of which were outcomes of the joint programme.

Highlights of Significant Achievements

A number of significant achievements were the direct result of the joint programmes and are worth highlighting as evidence of their impact. They also reflect the overall leadership the programmes provided in breaking new ground at the country level. This was pointed out in a report of the UNDP Gender Team (a product of the Knowledge Management efforts of the MDG-F) which included a list of "first ever" notable results such as: The National Surveys on Violence Against Women in **Vietnam and Guatemala**; the National Strategy to Combat Violence Against Women in **Occupied Palestinian Territory**; the Law against Domestic Violence and National Plans on GBV and Human Trafficking in **Timor-Leste**, and others.³¹

Important "first ever" achievements also include the formal agreements adopted by the Presidential Secretary for Women in **Guatemala** together with a number of Ministries (e.g. Health, Education,

³¹ Draft Report – "The value added of gender joint programmes: findings and recommendations to the wider community of UN agencies engaging in joint programming", MDG-F Knowledge Management Initiative for the Gender Window, UNDP, Sept. 2012.

Labor, Economy) to ensure that gender equality is regularly addressed within these sectors as a matter of policy and in order to ensure sustainability. The first gender audit of three line Ministries conducted in **Algeria**, and the first Plan of Action against GBV adopted by women in Buenaventura, **Colombia**, are additional good examples. Also in **Colombia**, female genital cutting, which was found to be a common practice among the Emberas communities, was addressed for the first time and prohibited.

Another breakthrough was the number of disadvantaged women that were formed as leaders as a result of the capacity building activities. Joint programme efforts succeeded in empowering indigenous women in **Bolivia and Guatemala** (e.g. through literacy and numeracy skills), for example, who were later found taking part in community decision-making processes for the first time. Also unprecedented and noteworthy were the women beneficiaries in **Ethiopia**, who gained confidence in themselves and became agents of change by mobilizing others in their community regarding gender roles and harmful traditional practices.

III. SUSTAINABILITY AND LESSONS LEARNED

A. Prospects for Sustainability

Despite the results achieved and expectations, it is premature to fully assess the likelihood of sustainability as there is insufficient data available to date. The likelihood of sustainability beyond the duration of the joint programme was addressed from the beginning and anticipated in the programme design which was generally based on a multi-sector, multiple-partnership approach and in collaboration with civil society. At least five elements of sustainability were considered in the planning process.³² They are: 1. Local ownership of the programme activities; 2. Sufficient resources committed to maintain results; 3. Institutional capacity to continue and maintain results; 4. National policies and institutional support to maintain results; and, 5. Enabling national and international environment to maintain results.³³ These elements were reflected in varying degrees in the joint programmes outcomes/results.

In most cases the planning of the joint programmes explicitly aimed for alignment of the outcomes with national priorities in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action, particularly the principle of national ownership. One specific way that continuity was envisaged was by mainstreaming GEWE in the future UNDAFs. For example, gender specific outcomes arising from the joint programmes were included in the new One Plan 2012-2016 in **Vietnam** by addressing GBV and other gender issues. Some resources were committed at the central and local level in several countries to ensure continuity of the programmes. Institutional capacity building was a major focus of the joint programmes and was expected to contribute to sustainability. The institutionalization of the joint programme within official structures increased government ownership and was also regarded as a measure that was likely to support its sustainability (e.g. **Ethiopia**). The enabling national and international environment was underscored as fundamental to ensure continuity in the joint programme in **Morocco**.

A number of measures were adopted and diverse approaches and practices were applied with a view to ensure sustainability. Sustainability was generally expected to derive from the achievements and results and by building on: capacity building initiatives; institutional structures newly established or fortified; new or strengthened legislative and policy frameworks; numerous studies, training tools, guidelines for data collection, monitoring and evaluation; and, a myriad of other products developed with the support of the joint programmes. Most importantly, the considerable increase in political will and support to GEWE generated by the joint programmes combined with the commitment by government authorities at both national and local levels, were considered promising indicators for ensuring sustainability (e.g. **Algeria, Guatemala and Nicaragua**).

Financial resources were committed in some cases in order to maintain the benefits produced by the programme. (e.g. **Bangladesh, Namibia, Vietnam**). Activities are being scaled up at the cost of the government and some budgets have been allocated to maintain new mechanisms and structures such as shelters for victims of GBV and funding gender activities. In **Bangladesh**, the Government agreed to continue supporting the shelter homes under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and to provide financial assistance through local government plans for women-friendly hospitals. In **Namibia**, some budgets were allocated for the training of police officers and emergency room

³² This is noted to some extent and with varying degrees in the evaluations.

³³ These 5 elements of sustainability are listed in the Mid-term Evaluation of the joint programme in Bolivia but they are not discussed in all evaluations of the joint programmes.

healthcare workers in hospitals on gender responsive laws. The gender analyses and gender-responsive budgets carried out in several government ministries were expected to provide evidence for addressing gaps in budget submissions to Parliament. It was also anticipated that these measures would lead to funding for gender activities and strengthen government capacities to further implement gender programmes. In **Nicaragua**, 7 Gender Units were established with the financial support of local governments. A financial commitment was obtained from the Government of **Vietnam** in the sum of approximately USD 38 million to implement the National Strategy on Gender Equality with a budget allocation to the National Programme on Gender Equality 2011-2015.

Elsewhere, however, it was noted that the financial capacity of the local counterparts in some cases (e.g. **Timor-Leste**) was low, which made it highly unlikely to sustain the programme activities without donor support.³⁴ Commitments either from government or from implementing agencies to ensure that resources are allocated in order to continue with the programme activities are still being pursued in other countries.

As noted earlier, the issue of sustainability was addressed from diverse perspectives. The significant increase in economic and political empowerment of the most excluded and marginalized rights-holders, for example, indigenous women in **Bolivia, Colombia and Guatemala**, was expected to contribute to behavior change and social transformation. There was some evidence of social transformation in **Bolivia** and **Guatemala**, primarily among indigenous women who were empowered by the income generating activities supported by the joint programme. Furthermore, it was noted in **Guatemala** that the stronger the women's movement in the country, the more likely that the achievements of the joint programme would be sustainable.

Other highlights of programme outcomes that were expected to contribute to sustainability are listed below that were aimed primarily at supporting institutional capacity and national policies to continue and maintain results.

National policies and institutional support to maintain results - A sustainability strategy for the joint programme in **Timor-Leste** was directed towards: the internal capacity-building of government agencies and NGOs and the adoption of favorable policies and plans that will institutionalize the programme results. In **Bangladesh**, the fact that joint programmes were implemented by a number of line ministries was considered as a key measure for sustaining the achievements.³⁵ Also, by targeting activities at institutional level it was thought to increase national capacity and provide guidelines and protocols for addressing GBV.

Training and technical support provided to local and national institutions - This support was provided in order to continue with the programme's objectives through training of government authorities in gender responsive budgets in **Guatemala** and the Gender Audit Team formed in **Occupied Palestinian Territory**, for example. Technical support was also provided by a gender adviser who is training and mentoring government staff in **Namibia**. The programme in **Vietnam** specifically focused on training ministry personnel on gender and capacity building by providing technical expertise within the ministries and aligning programme activities with ministry plans as a way to sustain the achievements after the programme period. Strengthening capacity within the ministries was also regarded as a long-term investment that will continue to sustain the achievements of the joint programme in **Guatemala**.

Strengthened legislative and policy frameworks - In a number of countries these developments were viewed as providing a legal foundation for further progress towards gender equality and sustainability of results (e.g. **Brazil, Bangladesh, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Timor-Leste, Vietnam**).

Local sustainable mechanisms - such as the National Gender Audit Team with the potential to carry on with the programme activities (e.g. **Occupied Palestinian Territory**) and the increase in capacity of municipalities to implement gender policies (e.g. **Nicaragua**) were noted. The "inter-agency roundtables" (*mesas interagenciales*) within the UN system in **Brazil** that engage in policy discussions on gender and race were singled out as a possible mechanism for continuity and sustainability. The formation of new women's networks and community groups such as the Women's Savings and Credit in **Ethiopia**, the National Women's Employment Committee in **Vietnam**, and the network of women migrant workers in **Bangladesh**, are all expected to contribute towards the sustainability of the achievements.

Numerous products created by the joint programmes - were expected to contribute to programme sustainability. This is due to the absence of studies, training tools and guiding documents that were needed to promote evidence-based laws, policies and programmes, as well as for monitoring and evaluation. Good examples include:

- first Gender Audit in **Algeria**;

³⁴ Noted in the Mid-Term Evaluation Report on Joint Programme in Timor-Leste.

³⁵ According to the evaluations of the joint programme.

- ILO Code of Practice and CEDAW Bench Book in **Bangladesh** as guiding documents for duty-bearers, and the nearly 15 million core textbooks that were revised for gender sensitivity and balance and were distributed among students nationwide;
- the Study on the participation of women in executive positions within labor unions and corporations in **Brazil**;
- new toolkits, manuals and textbooks developed in **Namibia**;
- the Study on Women's Cooperatives in **Occupied Palestinian Territory**; and,
- National Study on Domestic Violence in **Vietnam**.

Increased political commitment demonstrated by the mayors and municipalities in **Nicaragua** was seen as a positive sign that will contribute to the sustainability of results achieved by the joint programme. Institutional measures were adopted in 15 municipalities at the highest levels which have enabled them to count on methodological tools and guidance for policy and legal frameworks, as well as new modalities for mainstreaming gender in diverse future activities. It was suggested that for the programme to be replicable in **Nicaragua**, it is necessary to continue supporting the structures that were created by the joint programme at the municipal level and within the national institutions where capacity and expertise were developed.

Ethiopia Joint Programme - Example for possible replication.

With regard to the potential for scale up or replication of interventions, a good example where this is being discussed is in Ethiopia. The success of the efforts, which focused on empowering communities by targeting women and adolescents that had never received any form of training or support, was clearly evident to those responsible for the joint programme's implementation. Also deemed important was the involvement of community leaders such as chairpersons of women's cooperatives and farmers' associations in decision-making which served to strengthen community ownership, confidence and credibility in the programme.

Considering that the results were achieved through simple interventions at the community level, there are plans to replicate the programme in other regions of the country. The interventions included community conversations, and training on life skills, literacy, hygiene, and reproductive rights, among others. "It is an innovative programme that uses a simple and direct strategy to reach the intended beneficiaries. The programme directly addresses the needs identified in the baseline, and as a result, there is great enthusiasm among communities to participate and for the programme to widen its coverage of the population."³⁶

B. Key Lessons and Good Practices

A number of key lessons and good practices are highlighted that were either regarded as noteworthy or frequently mentioned.

Strong leadership was deemed essential: The choice of lead government agency made a difference in the level of leadership provided. It was also noted that when the office of the Resident Coordinator, Agency heads and senior government officials provided strong support, the joint programmes had greater success during their implementation. For example, the **Morocco** joint programme was distinguished for having both strong UN and government leadership and strong coherence with the principles for aid effectiveness. Some of the UNCT Gender Thematic Groups were singled out in particular for their contribution as facilitators to the joint programmes and for their potential role for ensuring sustainability. In **Vietnam**, the choice to support the State Management Agencies for Gender Equality, Domestic Violence and Data in taking the lead role was deemed essential for the programme's success and sustainability.

Virtually all of the joint programmes included activities that fostered leadership and promoted accountability among the duty-bearers. This was evident by the numerous leaders with diverse backgrounds specifically targeted in the activities and fully involved during the implementation phase. They included parliamentarians, ministerial staff, religious leaders, municipal leaders, community leaders and others. New mechanisms were created that provide leadership and were the result of empowered community groups that received support from the joint programmes. In this regard, the women interviewed in **Ethiopia** stated that the participation of the community leaders had helped to open doors and enabled the individual farmers to gain confidence in the programme and allow their wives and daughters to participate.

³⁶ As noted in the Mid-Term Evaluation report.

Targeting the most excluded and disadvantaged women is a good practice: Most of the programmes targeted beneficiaries/rights holders whose human rights were not respected and protected and largely belong to the most disadvantaged and excluded population groups such as indigenous women, women of Afro descent and other marginalized sectors of society. (The experiences in **Bolivia, Colombia and Guatemala** have been noted earlier.) Targeting the most excluded groups is an effective strategy to reduce inequalities and contributes towards achieving gender equality and the MDGs in particular. For example, the selection of Credit Candidates for the **Ethiopian** programme, “Leave no women behind”, pursuant to established criteria, became well known and accepted by the communities. Priority was given to the following women: landless women, female heads of households, school drop outs, women living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, women with no chance of accessing other credit opportunities and candidates with limited means of generating income. The Community Conversation mobilization approach carried out with grassroots based community leaders who set the platform for other members of the community to participate, is another identifiable good practice. In **Bangladesh** the support provided to women affected by HIV/AIDS in the form of small grants which translated into modest income generating initiatives was identified as a good practice and recommended for possible replication.

Important role of civil society was inherent in joint programmes: The important role of civil society was inherent in most of the joint programmes but was not always elaborated and rather implied. In **Timor–Leste**, for example, a “significant level of ownership was observed in regard to the goals and objectives of the joint programme, from the government and civil society”, which was considered “key to ensuring sustainability”.³⁷ It was noted in particular in the joint programme in **Colombia** that the strategic relations established between the Government and civil society during the first phase of the programme helped to facilitate and promote the goals and objectives. New alliances were created that allowed for GBV to be considered at all levels of society. Consequently, new mechanisms and spaces for dialogue were created such as the roundtables for gender that raise awareness about the problem of GBV and bring government institutions and civil society closer together. The experience in Buenaventura was particularly noteworthy due to the commitment of the women’s organizations and civil society organizations, as well as the willingness of the population to address GBV. As a result, the first plan of action to ensure equal opportunity for men and women was developed in Buenaventura.

Increased knowledge of human rights: Some programmes caused significant change in the lives of disadvantaged women as a result of the knowledge they gained on human rights and of the importance, for example, of having an identification card or birth certificate to be active citizens. This was evident in **Bolivia** where interviews and focus group discussions with indigenous women showed that they understood their rights and could also articulate the duties and responsibilities of members of their own family. Most importantly, many of the women who had obtained their identification card or birth certificate (about 1,887 women between 2008 and 2011) showed that they understood its overall significance for claiming and exercising their rights.

Communication activities underscored: Some communication and advocacy activities were also regarded as good practices that contributed to the increased awareness among the general public on gender equality and GBV. The formation of the One UN Communications Team in particular was deemed an effective means to ensure wider and more frequent coverage on gender in **Vietnam**. In **Brazil**, numerous communication activities were emphasized as good practices including the full use of the media, the Internet and social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) for greater outreach. In **Occupied Palestinian Territory** a number of activities were carried out pursuant to an advocacy strategy and media action plan which included a website, a media campaign and the implementation of the 16 Day Campaign on Raising Awareness of GBV. These activities were all viewed as helping to advance the set policy objectives and development outcomes.

Choice of Implementing Partners: Several programmes involved the central agencies responsible for finance and planning (e.g. **Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Morocco, and Timor-Leste**). In **Colombia** the government agency responsible for national planning and in **Ethiopia**, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and its regional bureaus were listed among the implementing partners.³⁸ In **Vietnam**, the General Statistics Office of the Ministry of Planning and Investment for Data played a key role in the implementation process by drafting the Set of National Statistical Indicators on Gender Equality while coordinating inputs from line ministries, UN agencies and donors. Little information is available, however, as to the full extent of the participation of these particular ministries in most joint programmes. Overall, the large number of implementing partners was regarded as a contributing factor to the achievement of results.

³⁷ As noted in the Final Evaluation Report.

³⁸ Ibid, Table 4, Development Partners Contributing to Multi-Sector Programming.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study has documented the key findings of the results and achievements of the 13 Joint Programmes on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, identified the main approaches and interventions, prospects for sustainability, as well as some good practices and lessons learned. The findings indicate that the joint programmes have all contributed to further the progress towards the Millennium Development Goal 3 and other MDGs. This has been achieved essentially by increasing the political commitment at all levels, building capacity of institutions and numerous actors, strengthening legislative and policy frameworks, allocating resources and raising greater awareness of GEWE, as well as GBV. For the most part in all the countries selected, the joint programmes were able to foster greater recognition of gender equality as a human right among the leaders/duty-bearers, and also increase their understanding of the interrelationship between gender equality and achieving the MDGs.

While it is still premature to ascertain the full impact of the joint programmes to date, there were some visible positive signs in the policies and laws adopted or strengthened, institutional building and behavior change of the beneficiaries, as well as in the specific action taken by both duty-bearers and rights-holders towards the realization of GEWE. In addition, there was some evidence that the lives of many beneficiaries had improved in all the countries concerned as a result of the programmes.

The findings of this study also shows that the realization of gender equality continues to be a major challenge for all countries concerned despite diverse political, economic and social conditions. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct a situation analysis of the country context to identify the priority areas for programming and the most effective strategies and interventions.

In many cases, the joint programme was the first initiative in the country that brought together a wide range of partners working in a collective manner and using a multi-sector approach. Some joint programmes were envisaged within the spirit of "One UN" and designed to make full use of instruments and modalities applicable to the UN system (e.g. **Bangladesh** and **Vietnam**). The fact that some joint programmes were implemented with a number of different line ministries was seen in some countries as a promising measure to ensure its sustainability.

Although there were a number of challenges in programme implementation due to the multiple partnerships and multi-sector approach as well as time limitations for implementation, the joint programmes were nevertheless successful as measured by both qualitative and quantitative indicators. The outputs of all 13 joint programmes contributed to improved skills, knowledge and practices among a wide range of duty-bearers and also strengthened the capacity of rights-holders to exercise their rights. Important progress was also made in addressing the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups and providing evidence-base data for policies and programming. Among the key achievements, a policy and legal foundation was developed or strengthened in many countries which will serve to make further progress in addressing gender disparities in all areas and in combating GBV in particular. Finally, the comprehensive response and synergy generated from the collective action is likely to have a significant impact on the beneficiaries in the countries concerned in the years to come.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Some recommendations are provided below that emerged from the evaluations or from the interviews with key informants:

Capacity Building

- Capacity development efforts should concentrate on both rights-holders to ensure that disadvantaged and marginalized women and girls are empowered to exercise their rights, and that duty-bearers have the capacity to fulfill their corresponding obligations regarding the protection and promotion of GEWE.
- Political will is fundamental for sustaining the achievements towards GEWE. Since government authorities and particularly legislators are constantly changing, institutional building through capacity development is essential in order for results to be sustainable. Thus, awareness-raising, sensitization and capacity building must be continuous and ongoing.

Communication and Advocacy

- The need for an advocacy and communication strategy on GEWE to be included in the joint programmes from the beginning.
- The multiple forms of discrimination suffered by large segments of the female population in some countries requires concentrated efforts not only at the policy level but also in promoting

changes in behavior within the society through vigorous advocacy and communication campaigns.

- More strategic advocacy is needed at the local level to promote the human rights of women and girls and for GBV to be made a higher priority by government policy-makers at all levels and community leaders.
- The CEDAW and CRC state party reporting process provide continuous opportunities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment at the national level, including at the highest policy level.³⁹

Programming and Interventions

- Conducting a situation analysis on GEWE is essential for developing a joint programme on gender, and in those countries that are in a post-conflict phase a post conflict assessment is necessary.
- Providing small grants, access to credit and supporting income generating activities or modest businesses created by disadvantaged and marginalized women are an effective means to increase their income and possibly move them out of poverty within a relatively short period of time.
- Simple interventions at the community level can make a difference in improving the lives of women and also serve to change gender roles and improve the status of women.
- Including men as the targeted beneficiaries should be underscored in all programmes from the beginning in order to promote GEWE.

³⁹ This recommendation can be inferred from the findings in the evaluation reports from the 13 joint programmes.

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ANNEX

Methodology of MDG-F Study on the 13 Joint Programmes on Gender Equality

The methodology applied to the study included the following:

- A comprehensive desk review of the key monitoring and evaluation documents of the 13 joint programmes including Mid-Term Evaluations, Monitoring Reports, Gender Improvement Plans and Final Evaluations.
- An analysis of the evaluation documents following the established evaluation criteria (relevance and coherence, design, ownership, scope, efficiency and effectiveness, etc.) and the criteria provided by UNDP Practice Note on Capacity Development, as well as by comparing qualitative and quantitative data. The key findings were highlighted and synthesized. Examples of specific achievements/results, approaches and interventions, good practices and lessons learned, regional trends, and the prospects for sustainability were captured and documented.
- Interviews with key informants to obtain insights into the achievements and main interventions applied in the joint programmes, as well as to capture as much as possible their impact on the intended beneficiaries. Interviews were held with the following individuals:

Maria del Carmen Aguilar,
Consultant for Joint Programme, Guatemala

Mohamed Oudris Benouali
Coordonnateur du Programme
UNDP Algeria

Marianne
International
JP-VAW, UNFPA Bangladesh

Programme

Berner
Manager

Flor Maria Diaz
Coordinadora del PC Ventana de Paz
UNDP Colombia

Rafiqul Haider
Joint Programme Coordinator
UNDP Timor Leste

Ines Mazarrasa Steinhuhler
Coordination Officer/Special Assistant to the RC

UN Resident Coordinator's Office, Ethiopia

Hanna Nakleh
Joint Programme Coordinator
UNDP Occupied Palestinian Territory

There were a few limitations in conducting the study due to the following:

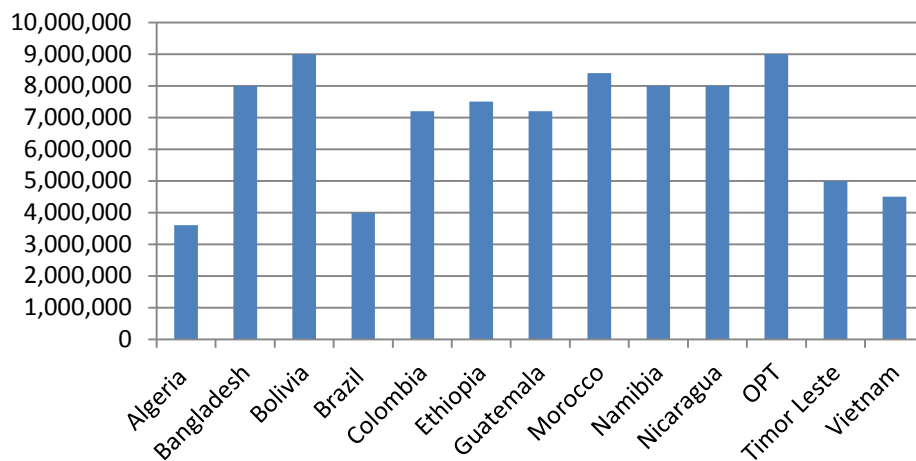
- The inability to contact all key informants in the countries where the joint programmes were carried out.
- In those countries where the joint programmes had ended, some of the individuals that had been involved were no longer available.
- Final evaluations are pending for some of the joint programmes (Algeria, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Timor-Leste.)
- For the most part, it was premature to assess the impact the joint programmes have had on the intended beneficiaries.

Many joint programmes had limited quantitative data (e.g. Brazil.) and in some cases it was either unavailable or reportedly not possible to estimate.

Budgets of 13 Joint Programmes and by Region

Country	Budget
Algeria	3,600,000
Bangladesh	8,000,000
Bolivia	9,000,000
Brazil	4,000,000
Colombia	7,200,000
Ethiopia	7,500,000
Guatemala	7,200,000
Morocco	8,400,000
Namibia	8,000,000
Nicaragua	8,000,000
OPT	9,000,000
Timor-Leste	5,000,000
Vietnam	4,500,000
Total	89,400,000

Budgets of 13 Joint Programmes



Asia

