

Joint evaluation of the UN Joint Programme on AIDS on preventing and responding to violence against women and girls

Evaluation Offices of UNAIDS, UNHCR, UNFPA, ILO and UNESCO



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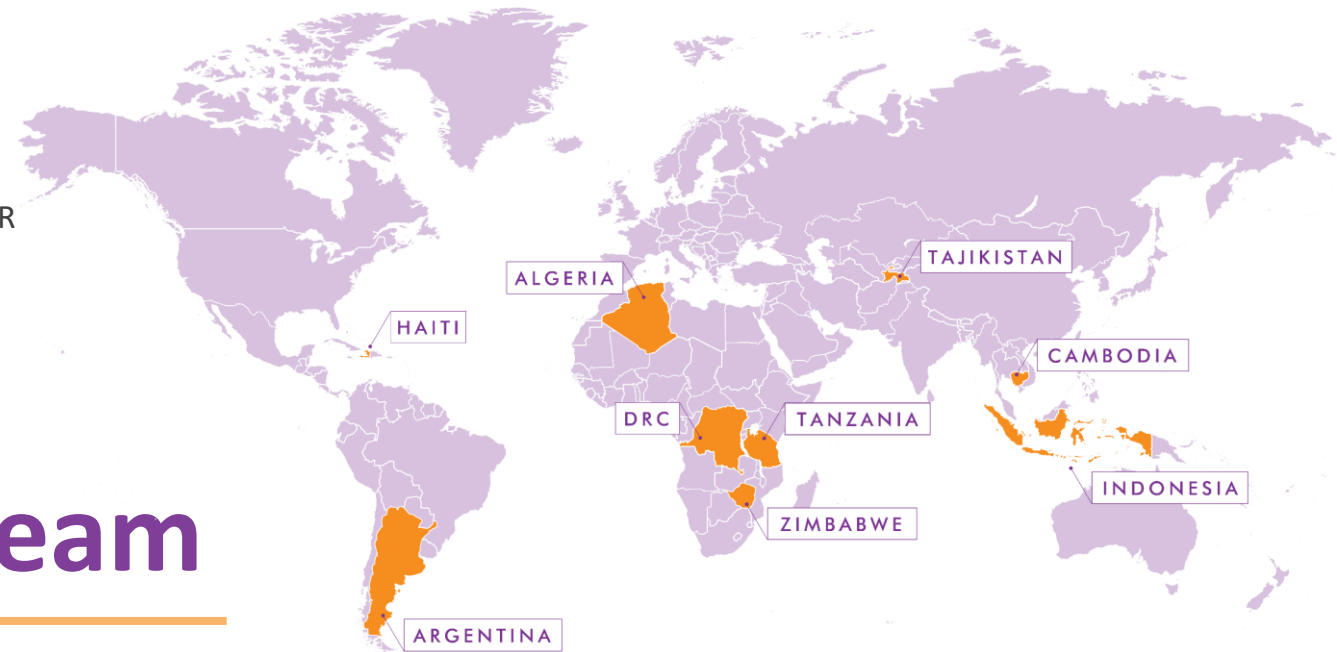
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The team



Purpose of the evaluation

- To assess the Joint Programme's (JP) **accountability** to end violence against women
- To assess **results** achieved; identify **lessons learnt**; and develop practical **recommendations** to support learning and evidence – based decision making for future programming
- To focus on JP's **efforts to support countries** to implement transformative approaches for addressing HIV and violence against women and girls in collaboration with women's and adolescent girl's groups and relevant civil society networks
- To focus on the **bi-directional linkages between HIV and VAWG** in different contexts, among different groups and different types of violence



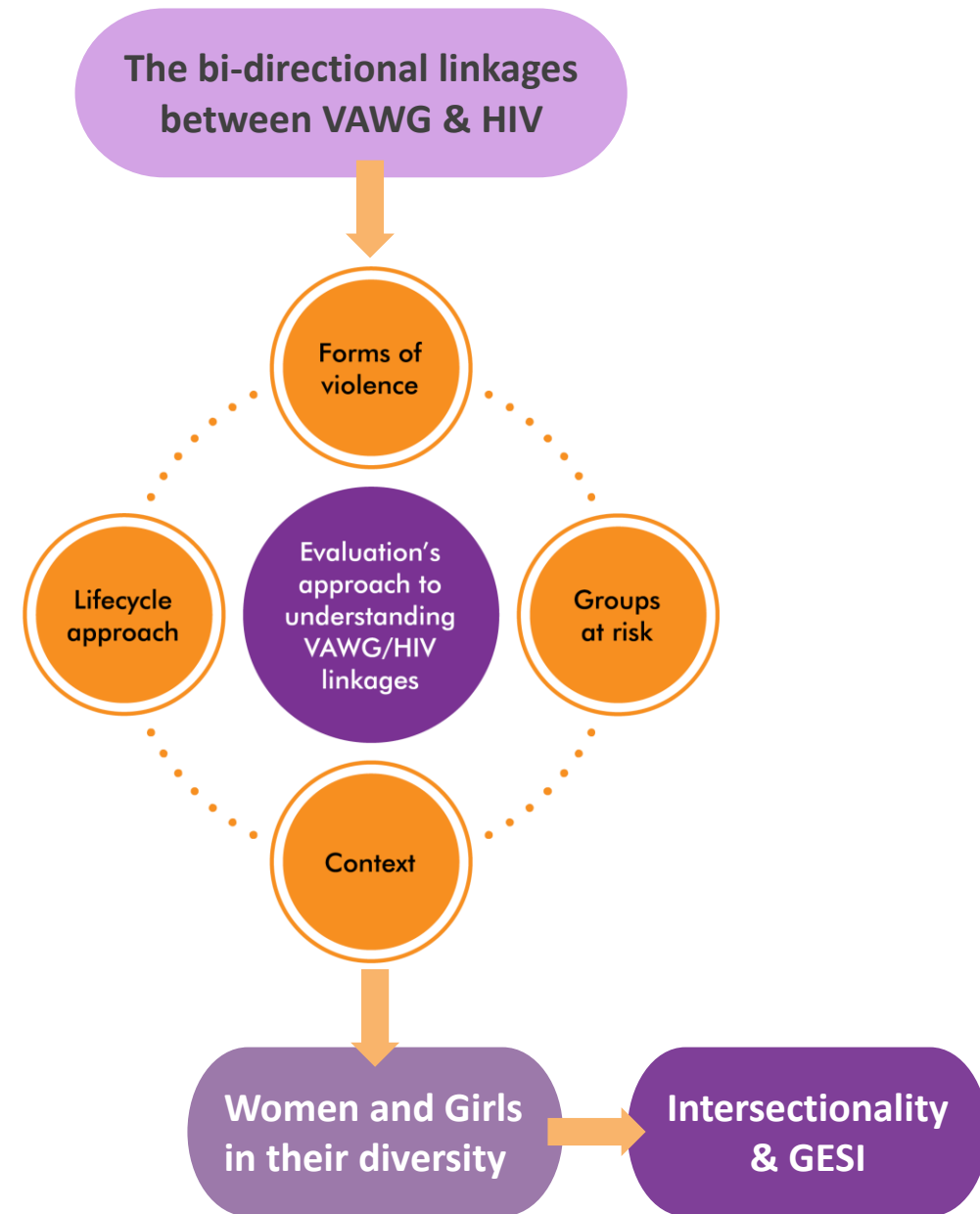
Scope of the evaluation

VAWG vs. GBV

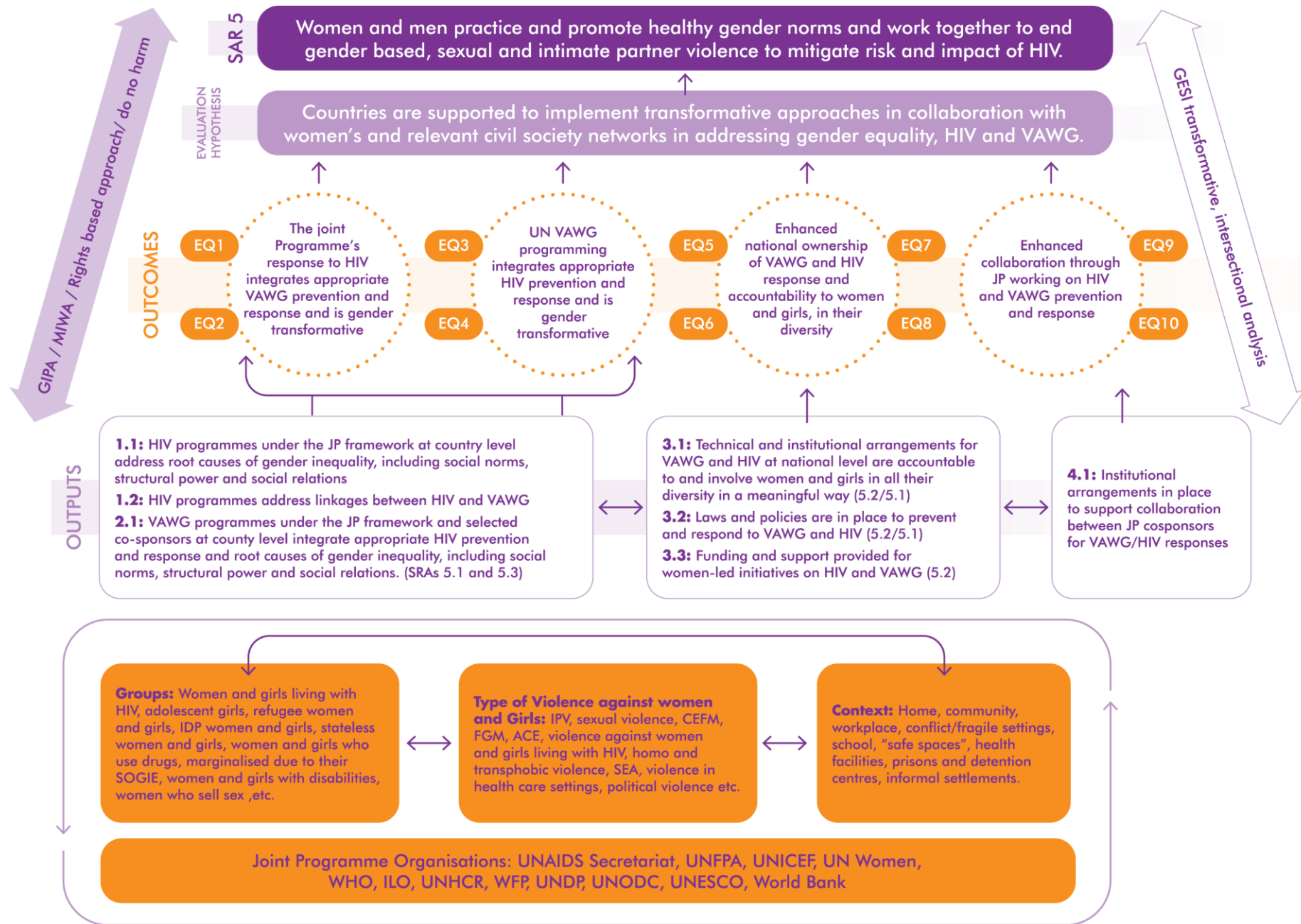
The evaluation is framed around **violence against women and girls (VAWG)**. VAWG is defined by the UN as ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life’ (in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women). VAWG is therefore a type of GBV

While other conceptualisations of GBV also include violence against men and boys, the evaluation will focus on violence against women and girls in their diversity, including among **key populations** and **gender diverse groups**

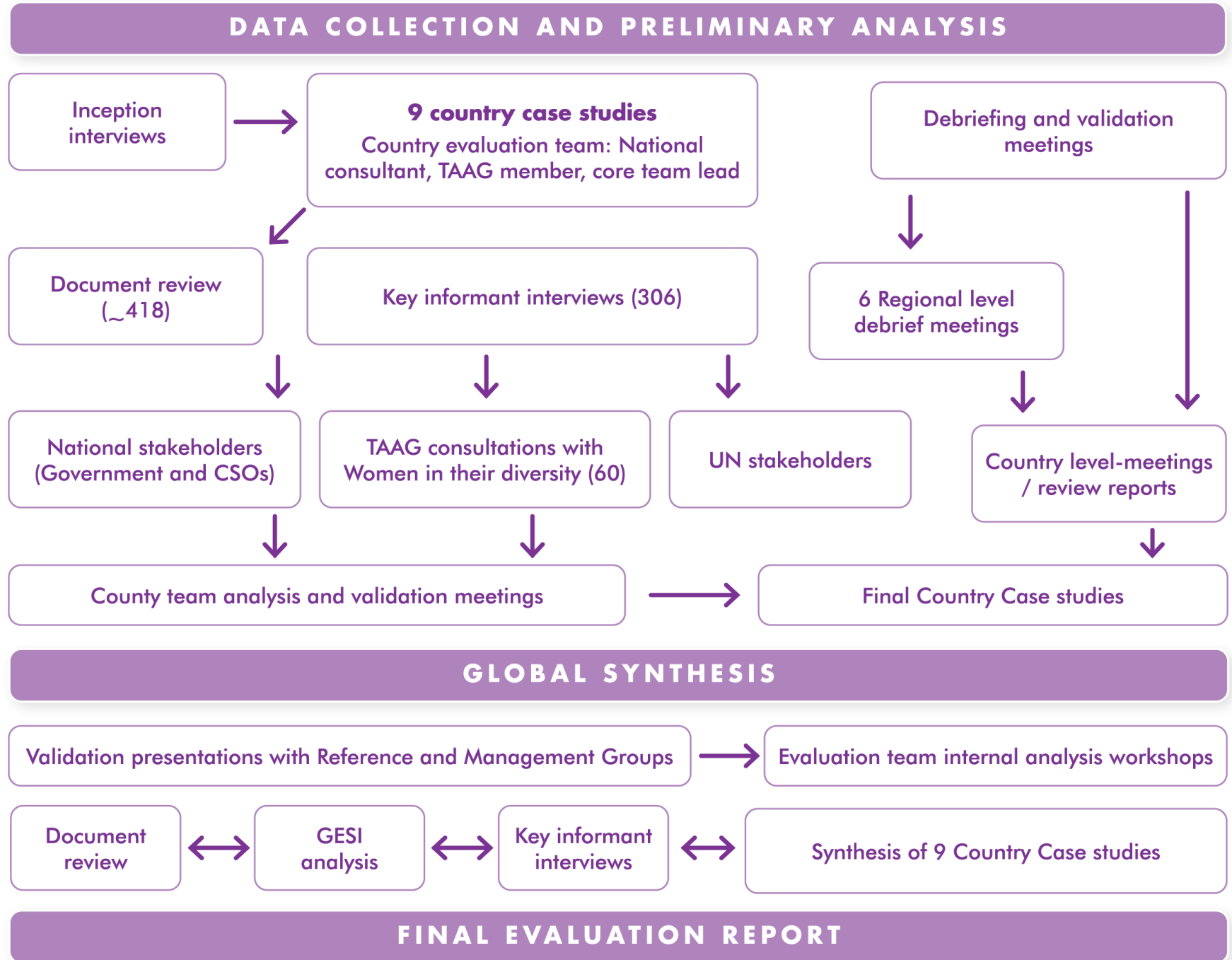
The report adopts a VAWG terminology. However, when referring to documents and interviews it will reflect the terminology/ conceptualisations/ descriptions used in documents and by key informants, meaning that sometimes ‘GBV’ will be used instead of VAWG



Evaluation Theory of Change



Methodology

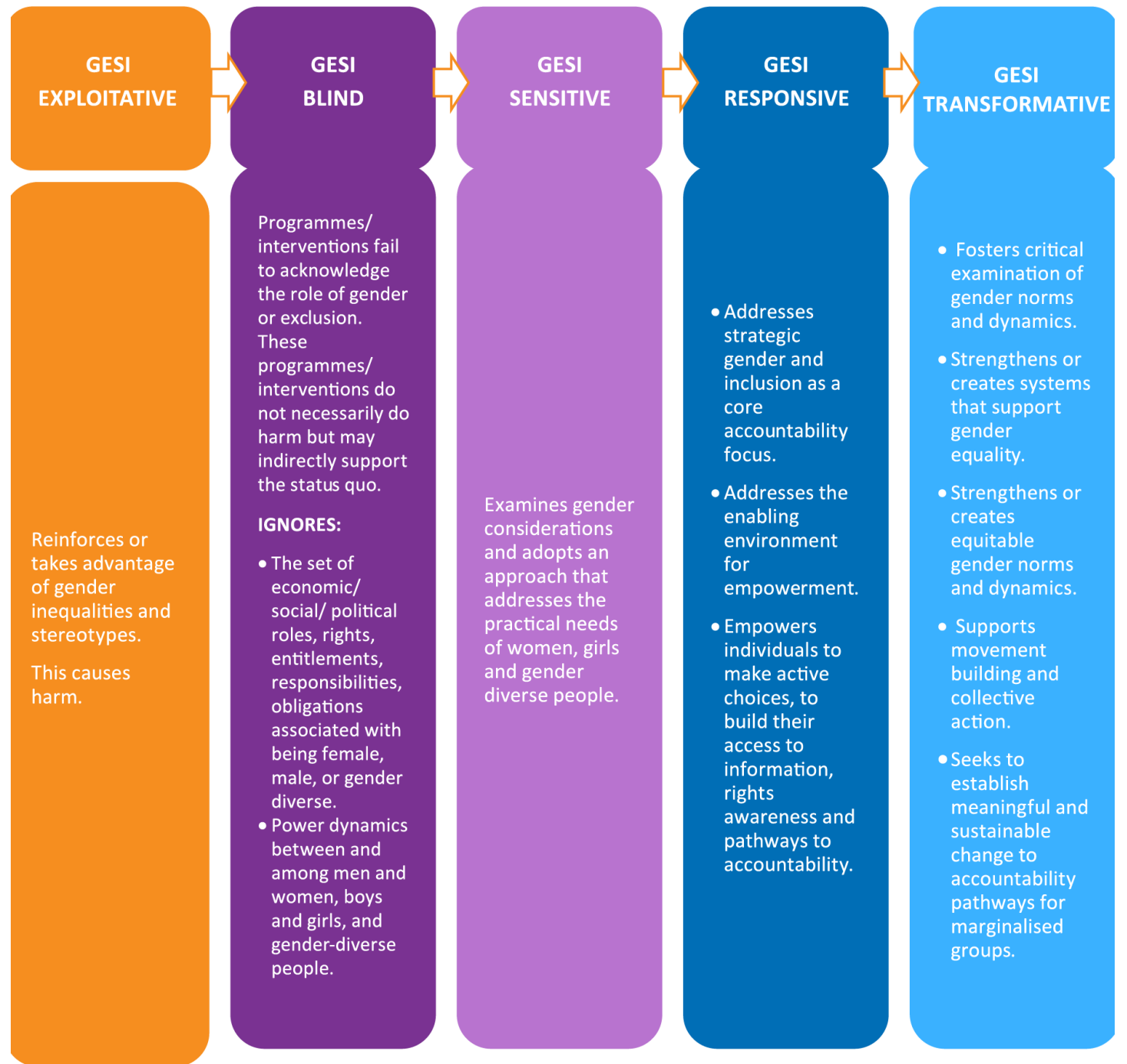


Role of the Accountability and Advisory Group (TAAG)

- The TAAG was made up of 3 global and 10 country members (2 in Cambodia)
- It advised the evaluation on topic guides and stakeholder lists, and participated in internal team validation meetings, and some country feedback meetings
- The in-country TAAG member led on the identification of key informants representing women in their diversity in the context of remote data collection as a result of COVID-19. They conducted all the remote or face to face interviews and FGDs with these key stakeholders.
- Views of TAAG members concluded that:
 - Their involvement enabled women in their diversity, who are often left out of these types of evaluations, to be involved, and have their voices heard – including transgender women, female drug users, female sex workers, and women living with HIV
 - They felt the TAAG gave them the space to speak and highlight some key issues related to HIV and VAWG that they feel are often neglected

“The TAAG has the closeness with the community. It was an important experience because it gives the community connection, and the experiences that are being brought to light”

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Mapping



Headline Findings

Theory of Change Outcome 1

The Joint Programme's response to HIV integrates appropriate VAWG prevention and response and is gender transformative.

- Where violence against women and girls is addressed through the health sector response to HIV, it is primarily through HIV prevention interventions and mainly focuses on VAWG response rather than prevention
- Vertical transmission programmes present a major opportunity to improve the way VAWG prevention and response is addressed
- Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) interventions include a focus on both HIV and VAWG prevention and response. There are some positive examples of an integrated approach to HIV/VAWG in AGYW programmes. Generic SRHR programmes do not appear yet to have achieved this degree of integration
- Service provision in humanitarian settings, supported through the Joint Programme appears to routinely address both HIV and VAWG through response services. Aspects of prevention are addressed less frequently
- HIV and VAWG in workplaces are largely approached separately. HIV interventions at work do not appear to systematically take a gendered approach nor link with VAWG interventions, although some indirect linkages to VAWG are recognised
- The focus on key populations within HIV programming does not adequately address the intersectional needs of women and girls in their diversity and is often gender blind
- Interventions that address stigma and discrimination of people living with HIV and key populations rarely address aspects of institutional and structural violence particularly in relation to women and girls

Headline Findings

Theory of Change Outcome 2

UN VAWG programming integrates appropriate HIV prevention and response and is gender transformative

- Where the health sector response to VAWG integrates HIV, it is usually through providing testing and Post Exposure Prophylaxis. The focus is on the direct linkages between SGBV and risk of HIV transmission, with little evidence of any focus on other VAWG/ HIV linkages in health sector interventions, for example, barriers faced by women living with HIV in accessing VAWG services particularly related to stigma and discrimination
- There are positive examples of VAWG / HIV integration at various levels in the education sector, primarily through Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), which has been taken up by governments in several countries
- AGYW programmes show positive examples of VAWG and HIV integration, and frequently focus on gender inequality and social norms that underpin both VAWG and HIV risks among adolescents
- The lack of recognition of VAWG/ HIV linkages and lack of meaningful engagement of women living with HIV in three out of five Spotlight countries in this evaluation signals a significant missed opportunity for the UN and the VAWG sector to engage on HIV issues
- VAWG programmes do not systematically include women in their diversity living with HIV or women from key populations. Where women and girls in their diversity are included, they appear to be narrowly defined and interventions are unlikely to address the range of violence and discrimination faced by women and girls living with HIV, including institutional violence, IPV, economic violence and NPSV

Headline Findings

To what extent is HIV and VAWG programming gender transformative?

- No country programme as a whole was found to strategically adopt a gender transformative approach throughout its HIV or VAWG programming – but programmes demonstrate various elements of gender transformative approaches. However, there is a lack of evaluations of these programmes
- Gender transformative approaches occurred more often and had a stronger focus in VAWG programming, multisectoral AGYW programming and CSE, which often included a focus on men and boys
- The UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors do not always have a clear understanding of what is meant by gender transformative approaches in programming that address HIV and VAWG. Gender mainstreaming was often seen to equate to a gender transformative approach
- Both HIV programming and VAWG programming showed limited evidence of intersectional approaches. VAWG programmes did not often recognise the needs of or involve women living with HIV; and HIV programmes that focus on key populations often pay insufficient attention to women and girls in their diversity

Headline Findings

Theory of Change Outcome 3

Enhanced national ownership of VAWG and HIV response and accountability to women and girls

- The Joint Programme appears to be aligned to national policies and strategic frameworks in all case study countries, but this does not mean that the frameworks themselves all address the bi-directional nature of HIV and VAWG
- The scale of both the HIV and VAWG response and resources invested by the Joint Programme in all countries was small scale and thinly spread. Funding is often short-term and for one-off activities
- Good coordination with governments, civil society and other donors and development partners was noted across all case study countries, supporting joint planning, prioritisation and strategic decision making
- The Joint Programme's contribution to national ownership was found to be significant as evidenced by improved national strategies and protocols and government take up of specific programmes
- Joint Programme Cosponsors are playing an important role in strengthening the capacity of civil society organisations and creating dialogue spaces that include civil society across all our case study countries, but could do more in developing leadership skills of women girls living with HIV in their diversity and their network organisations in a more sustainable way
- UNAIDS' important contribution to increasing the visibility and voice of key population networks and membership groups has been highlighted by stakeholders at every level from the evaluation case study countries to the evaluation global interviews, however there are a number of voices missing from these conversations and consultations in particular with women in their diversity from key populations
- Accountability mechanisms between the Joint Programme and CSOs were generally underdeveloped. The focus is more on 'involving' civil society than mutual accountability to civil society and women and girls, which limits meaningful involvement

Headline Findings

Theory of Change Outcome 4

Enhanced collaboration among Joint Programme organisations working on HIV and VAWG prevention and response

- Active Gender and HIV thematic groups, both internal to UN agencies and external including other development partners have helped co-ordination of activities
- Collaborative programmes such as the Spotlight initiative were found to create a platform for enhanced collaboration and bring greater attention to the twin issues of HIV/VAWG in some countries but this requires intensive advocacy from UNAIDS and Cosponsors to ensure that this occurs
- While the Joint Programme was found to work well in its own right, it was not always sufficient to bring coherence across all Cosponsor programmes, nor was it maximising its potential for effective advocacy for the bi-directional linkages of VAWG/HIV (see outcomes 1 and 2)
- A number of common obstacles were identified across the countries in supporting the promotion of integrated HIV/VAWG programming

Strategic Recommendations



Recommendation 1

UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors should ensure that an explicit focus on VAWG is integrated into the new UBRAF planning document, with objectives linked to the Global AIDS strategy, 2021-2026, outlining key areas of action which relate to all Cosponsors and the Secretariat. This should be based on existing good and promising practice and evidence of what works

Recommendation 2

The UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors should produce short guidance notes that collate the evidence of what works to address the intersections of VAWG and HIV, highlighting key entry points and opportunities identified through this evaluation and existing good practice to guide future programming

Strategic Recommendations



Recommendation 3

The UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors should strengthen the mechanisms for accountability, and feedback, to civil society and women in their diversity, at country level

Recommendation 4

The UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors should consider how to improve ways of working so that the UBRAF envelope has a more catalytic and impactful role, including revisiting the funding mechanisms to support civil society

Recommendation 5

UNAIDS Secretariat should strengthen its advocacy role at regional and national level to amplify the need to address the bi-directional linkages of violence against women and HIV

Strategic Recommendations



Recommendation 6

UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors should ensure that Country Teams receive capacity building and training in addressing both HIV and VAWG through the lens of gender transformative policy and programming and how HIV impacts gender equality and norms

Recommendation 7

UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors need to improve documentation, evaluation and knowledge management, with some notable exceptions



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UNAIDS

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