Gender Transformative Change
Exploring its dimensions
Evaluation of ESCWA’s Centre for Women
About ESCWA

**ESCWA** is the Regional Commission of the UN Secretariat for the Arab world

**Goal**: to *influence policies* at regional level to foster sustainable development

It supports **governments** and **other actors** in the region through:
- Research and analysis for policy advice
- Advisory services
- Coordinating positions of government officials

Type of work: **normative**
ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW)

Mandate
Promote the rights of women in the Arab region in line with international conventions and conferences

Overarching goal
Achieve gender equality and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women

How can this ambitious goal be reached using a gender transformative change approach?

How can it be evaluated?
What is transformative change?

- Broad concept
- Called for by 2030 Agenda
- Little specific literature

Key aspects
- profound, holistic, multidisciplinary, multilevel, long-term, non-linear, emergent, inclusive, multi-actor, relational, shifting paradigm
Contextualization: SDGs and Arab Region

Taking into account the recommendations for the Thematic Review of SDG 5 in this year’s HLFP and the regional context, ESCWA has defined its level of action: Address structural barriers to gender equality (Governments).

developed an initial:
• working definition for gender transformative change
• region specific approach with three key dimensions
Definition

Gender Transformative Change

A deep **structural change** achieved by

addressing the **root causes** of gender inequality,

adapting to the **context**, and

collaborating with a wide network of **partners** who agree on a common overarching agenda and focused interventions.
Three Key Dimensions

- Root causes
- Context
- Partnerships
First dimension

Focus on the **binding constrains** at the structural level hindering the promotion of women’s rights

Conduct a **thorough analysis** of the underlying structures, policies and norms

Ask for the **why** through participatory processes including different actors

Integrate the **voice of the marginalized**
Second dimension

Revise assumptions and accept:

- **Little political will** to promote women’s rights
- Ongoing **conflicts** and forced migration
- **Weak participatory mechanisms** in political structures
- Possibility of **backlashes** for women’s rights

Can’t be considered as risks as they are **fundamental elements of the context**.

Need to revise rationale of interventions
Third dimension

Reach out to key actors working on same or interlinked issues at different levels

Develop a common broad strategic vision

Agree on focused interventions leading in a cumulative way to this vision

Clarify the role of each actor in working towards this vision

Look for complementarities
Example

Looking back at a past evaluation

How could the three dimensions be applied to the past evaluation of the ESCWA Centre for Women?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation ESCWA Centre for Women</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Criteria</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Timeframe</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Model</strong></td>
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</table>
Applying key dimensions

**Adapt Timeframe & Questions**

Cover a longer **time** frame (minimum 5-10 years)

Adapt the **lead questions** to focus on dimensions

1. **Root causes**
   - How were the **root causes** identified and addressed?
   - Was the voice of the **marginalized** integrated?

2. **Context**
   - How were the **contextual challenges** integrated in the intervention?

3. **Partnerships**
   - How were the **partnerships** identified?
   - Was a common **broad strategic vision** developed?

**New findings & recommendations: change to programme**
Applying key dimensions

**Revise Assumptions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions of Programme</th>
<th>Situation in Region</th>
<th>Revised Assumptions for Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political will to promote women’s rights</td>
<td>Little commitment, Reservations to CEDAW</td>
<td>Questionable political will to promote women’s rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political situation does not deteriorate</td>
<td># countries in conflict has increased</td>
<td>Conflict and forced migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political changes do not reverse acquired gains</td>
<td>Activity of CSO &amp; women’s machineries has gone back in some countries</td>
<td>Acquired gains can be reversed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Revise Theory of Change
Applying key dimensions

**Try new methods**

Need to embrace complexity to cover three dimensions

Gender transformative change can only be achieved if we transform how we envision and evaluate social change

Introduce new methods?

- More qualitative methods
- New sources of info & analysis
- Outcome mapping
- Systems thinking
- Collective impact
Thank you