
Gender Architecture Mapping & Costing Study

UN System Coordination Division, UN Women

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I. Introduction

Background

The current study is a part of the 2019-2021 Mapping and Costing Studies of Gender Equality Architecture (GAMC) across the United Nations system. The UN-SWAP ¹ (United Nations System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming) performance indicator 11 on the gender architecture defines minimum standards for UN entities. Entities meet requirements if (a) their focal points for gender equality at headquarters (HQ), regional and country levels are appointed from staff level P4 and above for both gender mainstreaming and the equal representation of women; (b) have written terms of reference and (c) at least 20 per cent of their time is allocated to gender focal point functions. Additionally, the gender unit has to be fully resourced in accordance with the entity mandate.

Upon request from UN-SWAP reporting entities, UN Women initiated this analysis of existing arrangements and resources within UN entities to implement the gender mainstreaming function. This exercise seeks to identify gaps and opportunities to improve, as well as to address the need to define further standards. The initial steps intended to collect start-up data on the human and financial resources devoted to gender equality work in UN entities and to conduct an analysis of the extent to which available resources meet the commitments to gender equality and empowerment of women (GEWE) as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ongoing reform of the UN System.

Further to this, the Secretary-General High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality ² recommended all UN entities to (1) establish the baseline investment in human resources for achieving GEWE objectives; (2) determine the existing human resources within the gender architecture; (3) provide budget allocations to meet no less than the established baseline; and (4) monitor gender architecture requirements and performance regularly. This recommendation was adopted in December 2019 by the Executive Committee of the Secretary-General together with other recommendations addressing financial resource tracking and allocations for gender equality and the empowerment of women, including in pooled funds and innovative financing mechanisms. The current 2021 implementation plan of the recommendations emanating from the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality has focused primarily on the harmonized implementation of the gender equality markers across the UN system to enable the estimation and strengthening of the financial resource base for gender equality and the empowerment of women in the UN system.

We have seen wide variations in GEWE architecture and costing within the UN system, as well as in the methods and success of data collection to facilitate knowledge acquisition and management. While progress has been made in building and mapping basic gender architecture, policies, strategies, and actions plans, there remains an ongoing need to sufficiently resource the GEWE agenda and to advocate for the increased and harmonized use of

¹ <https://gendercoordinationandmainstreaming.unwomen.org/un-swap>

² <https://gendercoordinationandmainstreaming.unwomen.org/inter-agency-coordination#navigation-content-3>

financial resource tracking mechanisms (such as gender equality markers) to quantify the disbursement of funds that promote GEWE. By addressing these kinds of gaps and continuing to build on the progress made with institutional arrangements to advance gender mainstreaming, the UN system can help to ensure that by 2030 no woman or girl is left behind.

Objectives and Presentation of Findings

Since the initial passage of the System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming in the Entities of the UN system (UN-SWAP), entities have included high-level results in their strategic plans, developed and implemented gender policies, increased senior level accountability for GEWE, improved and made new efforts to integrate gender focal points and gender mainstreaming in their work and planning, established mandatory gender trainings and participated in inter-agency coordination mechanisms, among other important milestones and standards.

In December 2019, the analysis conducted by the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality concluded that financing for gender equality remains insufficient across the United Nations and that, without investment in gender equality outcomes, results will remain elusive. The Task Force requested to harmonize implementation of financial tracking mechanisms and to establish financial targets and strengthen the resource base for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Implementation of those recommendations across all entities, country teams and pooled funding mechanisms is currently being addressed.

Findings from the present study fall broadly into three components: 1. the integration of high level GEWE objectives across entities, 2. architecture, costing and financial resourcing implicit in self-reported data provided by the responding entities and, 3. finally, methodological, and logistical issues that have constrained, or that could in the future facilitate, timely and accurate data gathering and analysis.

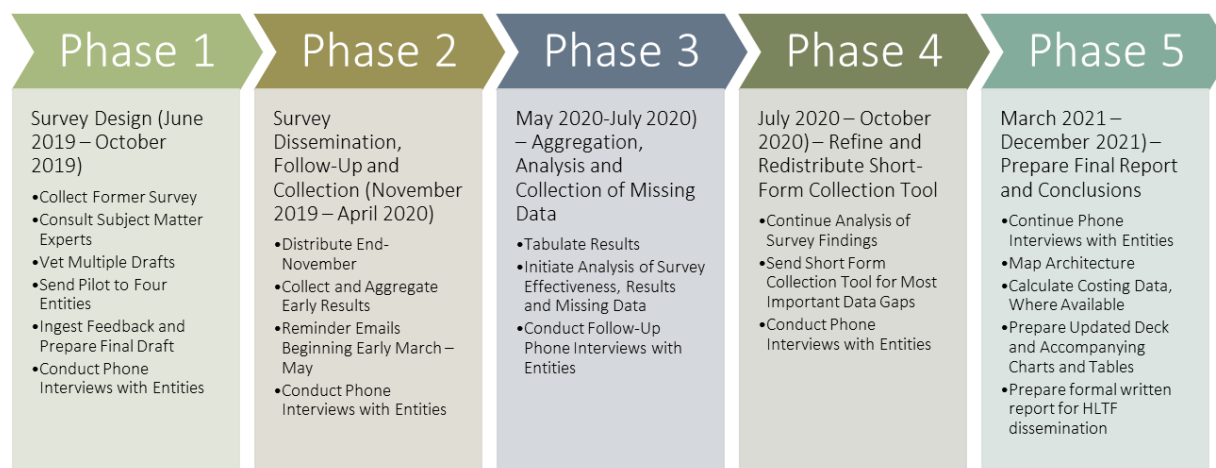
II. Scope, Methodology and Timeline

Scope of Work

The scope of the mapping and costing exercise of the UN system gender architecture entailed two surveys and multiple in person interviews and consultations with relevant stakeholders. Both the survey and the consultations covered a wide range of topics ranging from human resources and reporting lines to funding typologies and allocations.

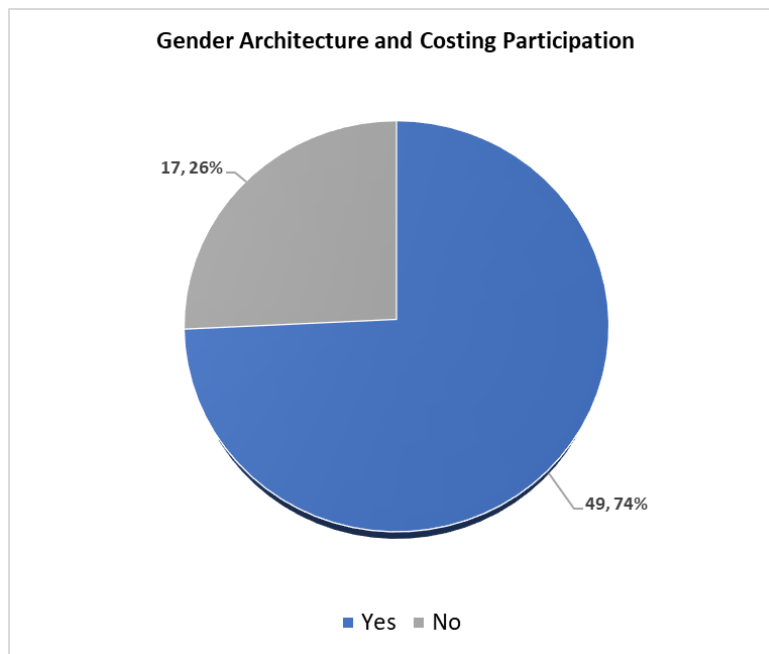
Timeline

Initial planning for implementation of the Gender Architecture Mapping and Costing (GAMC) study intended for the survey to be returned by the end 2019 and then collated and analyzed in the first quarter of 2020. The global pandemic, however, naturally shifted priorities, requiring a revision in the work plan, as outlined in the visual below.

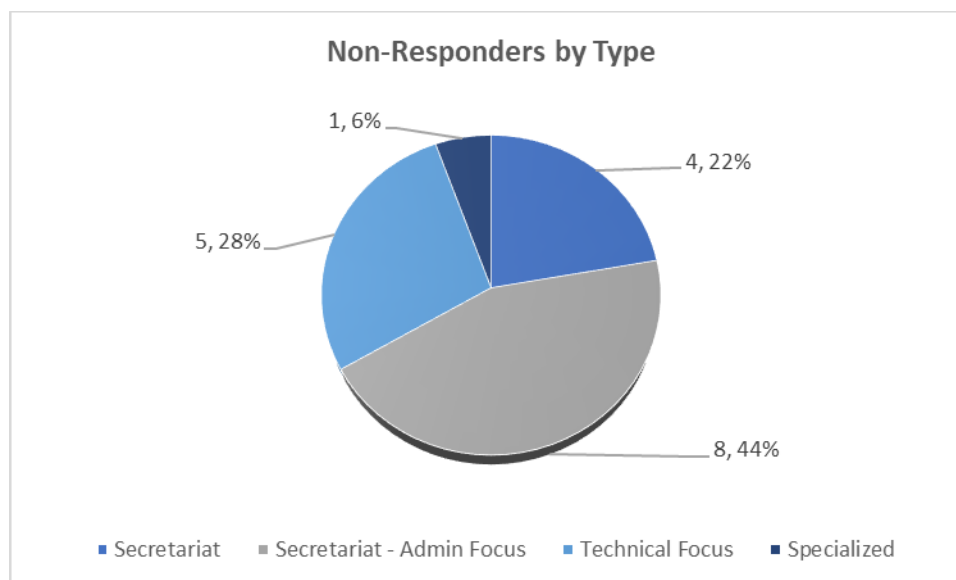


Participation

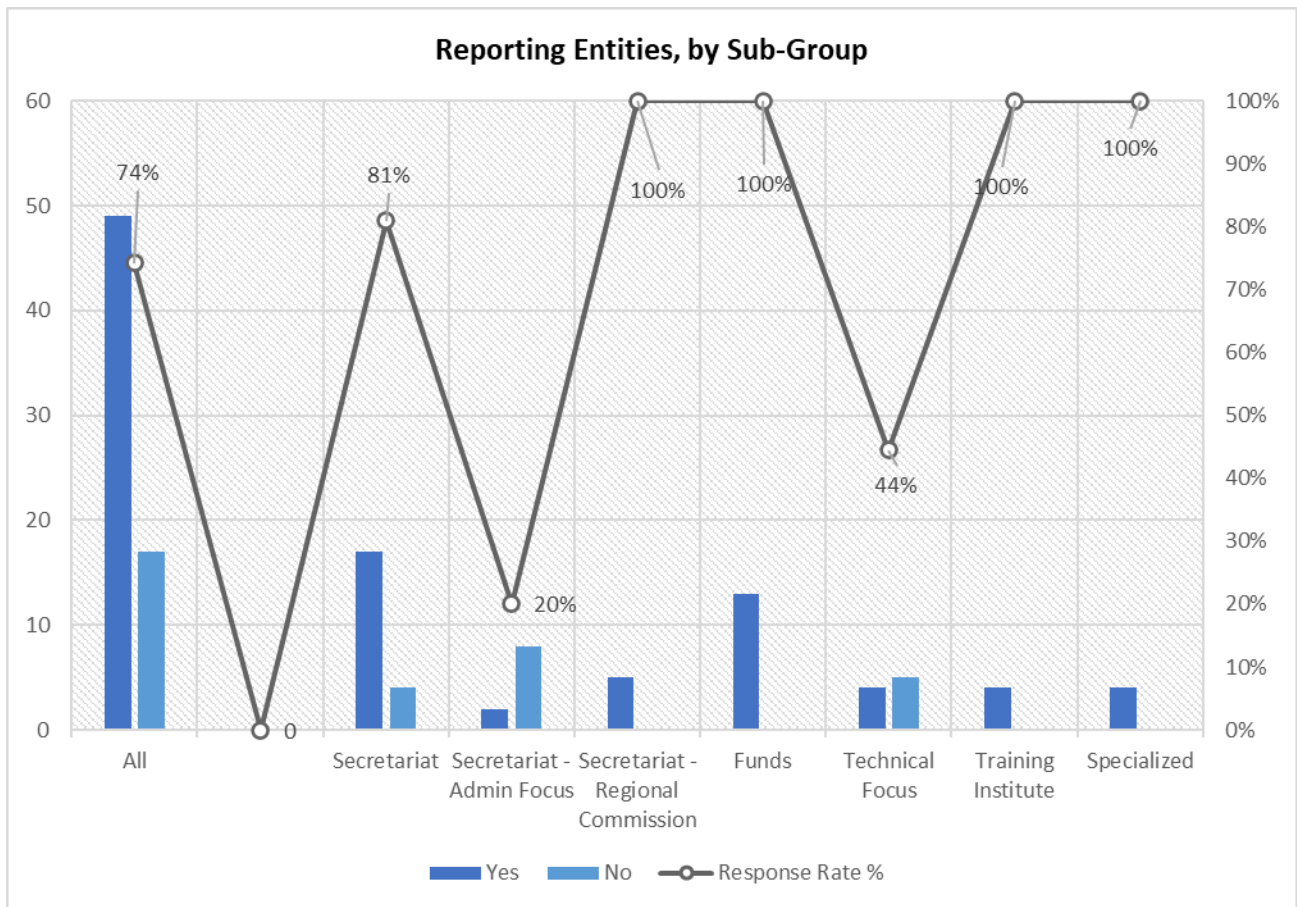
Despite the monumental distraction of the Covid-19 pandemic, forty-nine entities responded to outreach requests for both quantitative and qualitative inputs during 2020 and 2021. During June and July 2020, as worldwide lockdowns eased, at least one-third of these entities provided the GAMC team with updated information on their gender architecture, gender parity function, and gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment commitments and activities. During the spring and summer of 2021, we gathered further data and context through targeted phone conferences with some of the larger entities that had provided initial costing and architecture data during 2020.



Entities that did not respond to our survey outreach attempts include DMSPC, DOS, DSS, IAEA, ICAO, IMO, OAJ, OIOS, OLA, OSAA, OSRSG-CAAC, UN Global Compact, UNDRR, UNOMS, UNON, UPU, and WMO.



The UN system is a complex web of UN Secretariat departments and offices, Training & Research Institutes, Funds & Programmes, Specialized Entities, and those with a technical focus. To enable further analysis, additional clustering and cross-references have been implemented. It is interesting to note the diverse levels of responsiveness across these distinct types of entities, as further study may yield insights into how to improve participation where it currently lags. The five types of UN entities differ significantly by size & sphere of action and, accordingly, the rate at which they responded to this survey. Seventeen Secretariat agencies with a programmatic focus responded to the survey (81% response rate), albeit with low levels of completeness (59%). Regional Commissions had a high reporting rate of 100% with informative data provided in terms of costing. Those agencies with an administrative focus tended to be non-responsive to the survey and – when responding – provided little costing data. Funds, which typically have external donors and partners, achieved a 100% reporting rate, reflecting the increasing importance of GEWE across a spectrum of development finance entities contributing earmarked resourcing. Training Institutes were 100% compliant with the survey requests with surveys well-completed (75%), to the extent the questions were applicable. Aside from influencing the degree of survey responsiveness, as data collection and analysis continued on this project, it was clear that size also mattered in terms of standardization of arrangements to resource the gender mainstreaming function in specific entities.



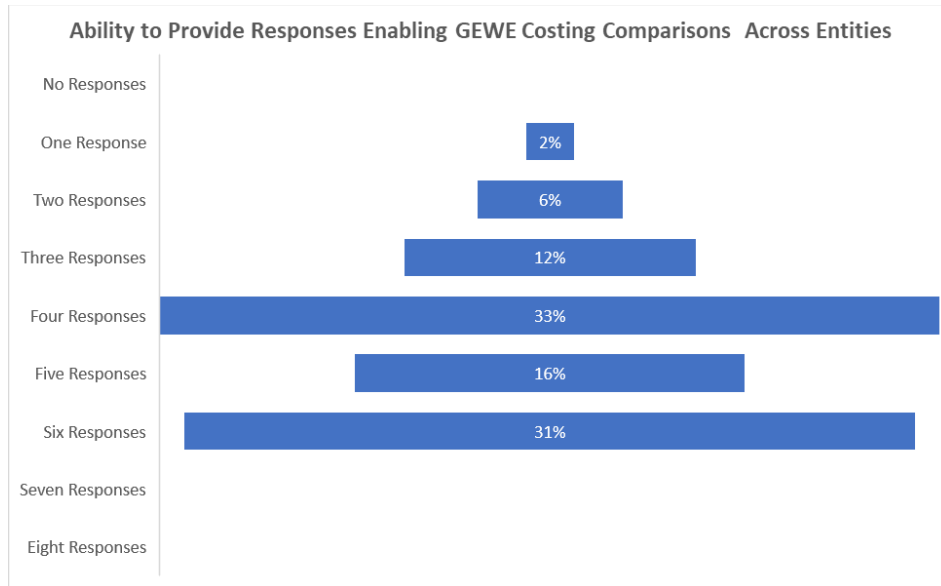
III. Highlighted Findings

Reporting on GEWE Spending

Overwhelmingly, entities find it difficult to track expenditures on GEWE -- both with staff (HR) and programming. That said, from the data collected and analyzed, as well as subsequent discussions, it is clear that a majority of entities are budgeting only a small fraction of total entity resources for GEWE staff and GEWE programming. Recognizing that the gender equality marker is primarily designed to track programmatic expenditures on GEWE, the existence of the marker (no matter at what result level integrated) is correlated with better access to GEWE costing data for both HR and programming. The gender equality marker indicates the existence of more effective accountability processes and tools for budgeting for, tracking for and even motivating GEWE expenditures in the entity.

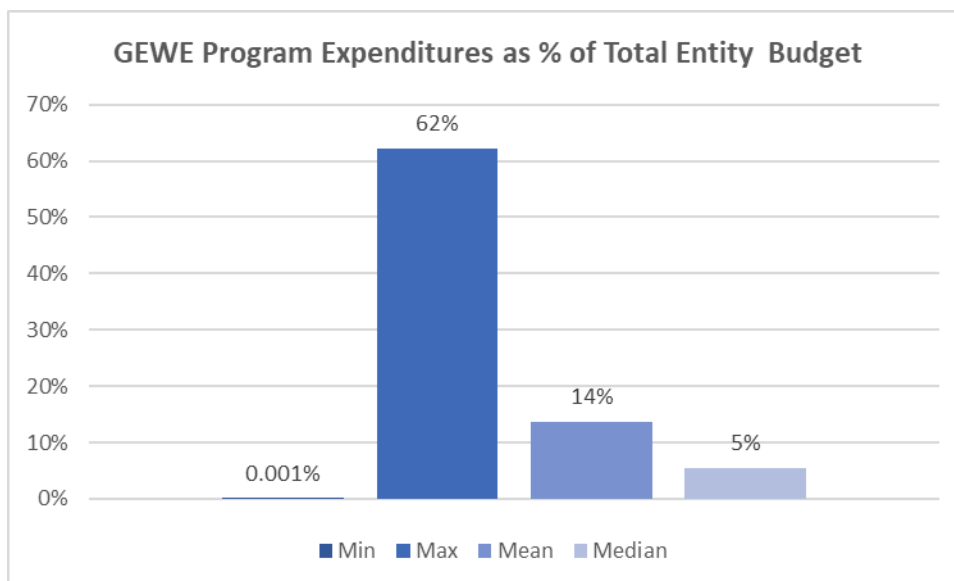
As an example of the widespread difficulty in providing meaningful costing data enabling comparisons across entities, of eight survey questions critical to provide standardized costing data, no entities were able to provide all eight responses. More than sixty per cent of respondents provided five or fewer responses. The key datapoints requested in the initial 2020 survey were:

- Total Entity Staff
- Total Cost of All Staff
- What is Total Entity Programmatic Budget
- Total Programmatic Expenditures
- GEWE Program Expenditures
- Source / Type of Funding for GEWE programs
- Total number of GEWE Staff Systemwide
- Total GEWE Staff Cost



Spending on GEWE

Recognizing the reporting difficulties associated with financial tracking -- including unknown and missing data, and differing definitions, currencies, and year-ends – entities are overwhelmingly spending a only small fraction of their total budget on what they define as GEWE-targeted. This data must be recognized for its gaps in consistency, yet still tells a story of the relatively low levels of GEWE budgeting and spending within organizations. Again, with the caveat that many entities did not provide full costing data, expenditures for GEWE staffing and programs remains an exceedingly small for nearly every entity reporting, other than those whose central mandate relates directly to GEWE. Furthermore, his is true no matter the GEWE architecture adopted -- whether within gender units, the genders advisory system or amongst gender focal points.



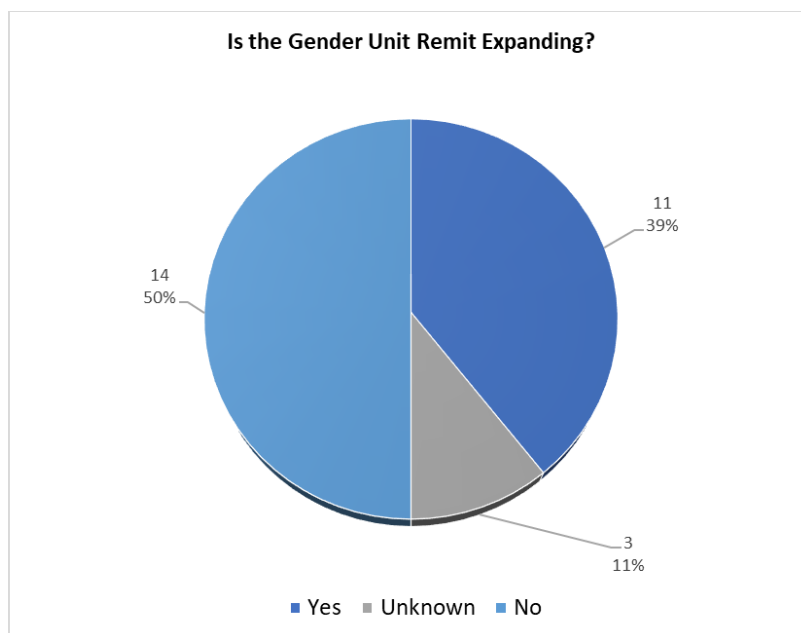
Gender Unit Expanding Remits

Entities with a substantial gender equality mandate and mid-to-large staff numbers³ tend to establish a gender unit at the HQ level. While the gender mainstreaming function can be assigned to a gender specialist or to an office, the role of the gender unit as custodian of the entity's gender policy remains critical to ensure coherence and consistency in procedures, capacity building and overall planning, monitoring, and reporting. This dedicated gender unit stands on contrast to the model – albeit not commonly seen within the UN system – of gender resourcing sitting within a larger Human Resources unit, dedicated to myriad HR objectives and with gender parity taking precedence over gender mainstreaming at a programmatic level (more on this below).

The evolving and expanding responsibilities assigned to gender units reflect a trend towards clustering multiple discriminations together. With the same resources and expertise, some entities are reporting an expanding remit, with additional portfolios on diversity and inclusion of additional marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, Indigenous communities, and LGBTQI+. In light of this and other considerations to be discussed, there appears to be some dilution in the resources and time gender units can dedicate to the issues of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Are gender unit staffing and funding levels keeping up? Or does this pose a risk of diluting the GEWE mandate? It became apparent to us, as we collected and analyzed survey data, that the monitoring of resource allocation -- against this backdrop of expanding gender unit remits -- will be important to ensure that resources are increased in accordance with the expanded mandate and responsibilities of the personnel.

Although outside the scope of the surveys analyzed as part of this work, we note that recent UN-SWAP data on Performance Indicator 11 (Gender Architecture), reported by UN entities in January - February 2022, appears to support this point – namely, some entities are reporting an expanding gender mandate, with an additional focus on diversity and inclusion of additional marginalized groups, including disabled individuals, indigenous communities, and LGBTQ. A survey on gender architecture revealed that 49 per cent of entities meeting and exceeding PI 10 (gender units) also note an expansion of the remit of gender units to broader inclusion agendas, mostly without the allocation of proportionately more resources. In effect, this diluted the resources directed at gender equality and mainstreaming.

³ For purposes of this analysis, we established 300 staff or below as “smaller.” Between 300 – 700 as “mid-sized” and above 700 as “larger.”



The Connection Between Location and Influence

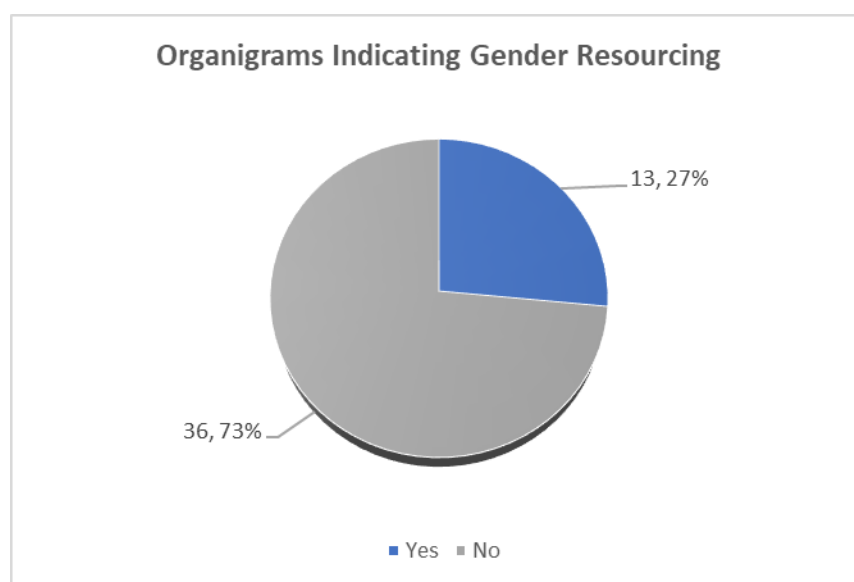
The location and reporting lines of the gender mainstreaming function is correlated to the influence of GEWE resources in the organization decision-making processes and prioritization and also to the ability to resource the gender unit and GEWE personnel. Inevitably, there are trade-offs in the placement. Institutional impact, opportunity and space for decision making budget management and policy influence are elements that need to be included in any assessment of the gender architecture.

GEWE resources located in the front office report to the head of the entity. While that signals capacity to influence decisions and global policies, it also may mean lack of specific budget line. Entities with the gender mainstreaming function at the programmatic level will report to the Program Director or head of a specific section. Being located in a programmatic section implies having at least a generic gender-targeted programme and specific budget allocated. While this entails some distance with the Head of Entity, it brings the possibility of using the budget line for funding seed projects within the gender focal point network, and therefore strengthen multisectoral action and network coherence.

The importance of the location of the gender unit in terms of influence was emphasized in the 2021 entity interviews and in-depth discussions. If influence is defined by capacity to inform decisions and/or to reach out to the core business of the entity, there emerged two options for optimal placement of gender resources: in the

front office or in programmes – or both. IN speaking with one entity, for example, where the gender unit is part of the Office of the Director, the entity notes they are additionally working toward establishing an internal thematic fund to address the required GEWE programmatic influence. This highlights well the internal discussion on gender unit placement as it relates to influence – on one hand, placement in the office of the Director may facilitate reaching out to colleagues in significant ways through expertise, whereas location closer to programmes may enable better support for GEWE projects/efforts “on the ground.”

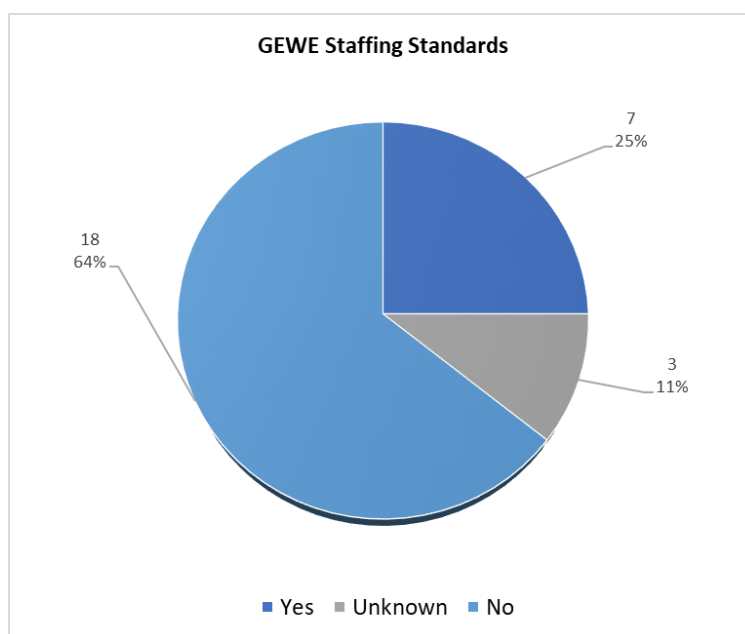
Inexplicably – and a commentary on the question of influence -- a majority of entities are unable to produce an organigram indicating the location of the gender unit or gender resources in the organization. Only 13 – or 27% - - of reporting entities produced an organigram that shows the positioning of the gender unit or gender resources, providing context for the integration and influence of gender mainstreaming within the organization.



Emerging GEWE Standards

Baseline GEWE standards -- or benchmarks -- are being organically adopted in some entities – both larger and better resourced, as well as smaller entities with fewer resources available for GEWE. Emerging discussions and requests for standards are being elicited by colleagues working on gender units or as gender advisors, specialists, or focal points. The establishment of GEWE standards seeks to guarantee the achievement of commitments of the United Nations entities related to gender equality. To this end the Staffing Standards are translated into institutional benchmarks that hold UN entities accountable to minimum standards for human resources and institutional arrangements dedicated to gender equality. While only a minority of entities have GEWE staffing standards, the question on this issue aroused the interest of a large number of entities. UNICEF is the most advanced entity in this respect since its Gender Staffing Guidance 2018 does not only set a minimum architecture but also focuses on capacity building. At present, UNICEF has developed a new Gender Staffing Guidance that establishes, inter alia, that country offices with a budget over \$20 million should have a full-time gender specialist

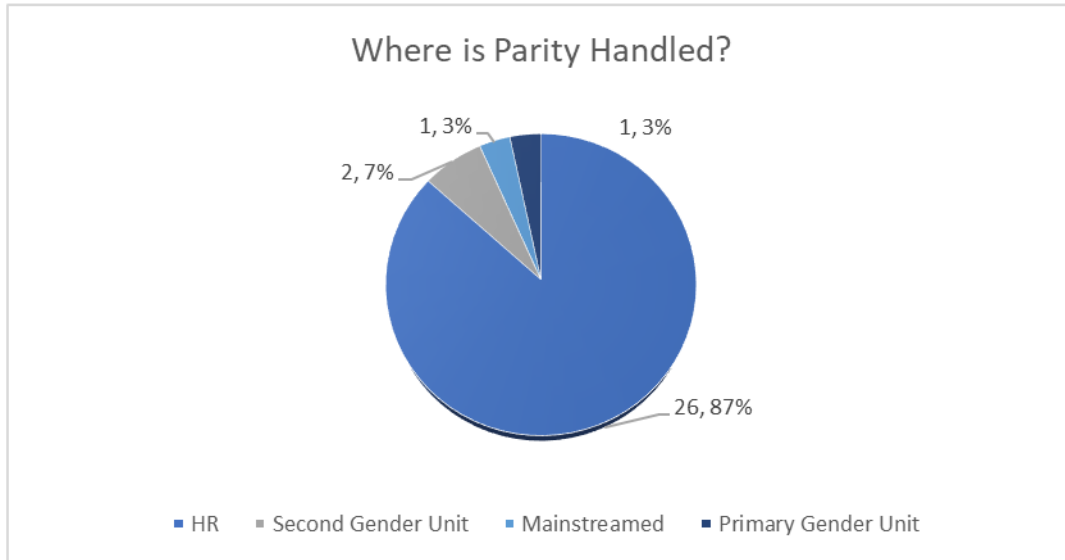
at the P4/P5 level and sectoral gender specialists to be embedded within largest CO program and one GFP or cost-shared subregional full-time gender specialist at the NOC/NOD or P3/P4 and above for country offices with an annual budget of less than \$20 million. For Level 2 or 3 CO response, the staffing standard requires one full-time Gender Specialist (P4/P5) WFP is drafting its new Gender Policy 2022-2026, which notes that a Gender Office shall include a senior gender adviser at Headquarters and gender units in regional bureaux headed by P-4 or P-5 fixed-term staff members or equivalent as well as the development of an implementation and resourcing plan that will inform human and financial resource allocations and commitments necessary to implement this policy effectively (a P3 Gender specialist for emergencies at the L3 level, for example) including the allocation of 15 percent of country programme funds to advancing corporate gender commitments. UNDP, for its part, establishes in its Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021 that country offices with a portfolio over \$25M have a dedicated gender adviser, in addition to the gender focal teams.



Gender Parity - Gender Mainstreaming

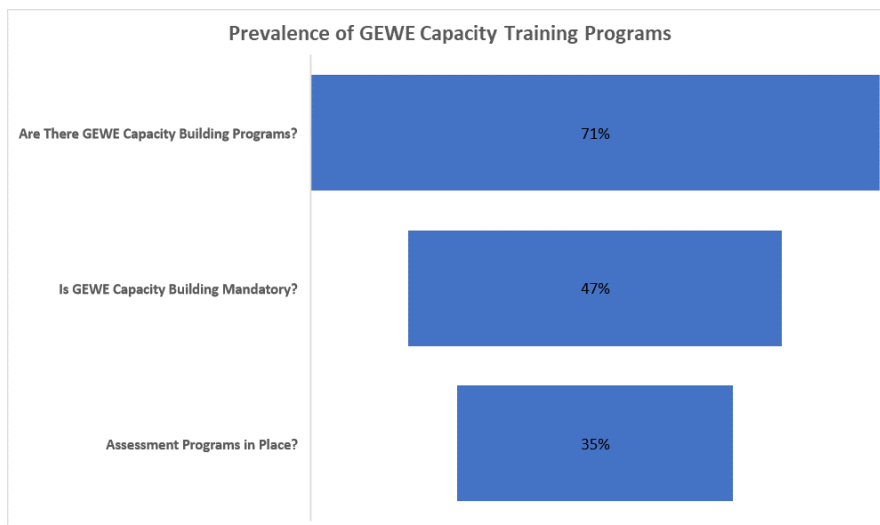
Gender parity and gender mainstreaming functions are usually well delineated and situated in different departments (with gender parity sitting primarily in HR). In other words, there is a clear distinction between gender parity and gender mainstreaming and certainly, parity cannot be conflated with gender equality. A qualitative analysis of responses determines that this is an efficient arrangement pointing at close collaboration between these two functions.

For small entities, there may be just one person with a double hat to address parity and gender mainstreaming functions. If that person is sitting in HR, their capacity to address gender mainstreaming in the organization can be severely curtailed.



Capacity Building

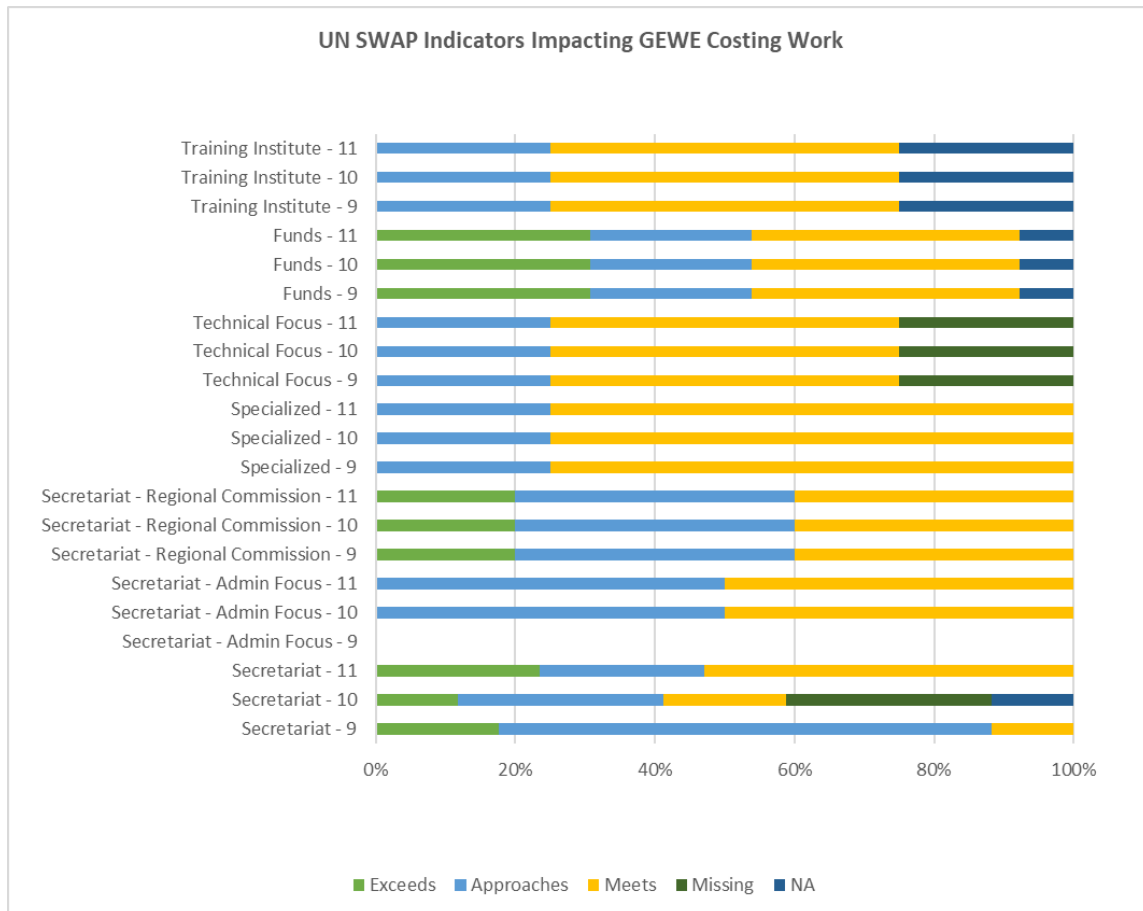
A significant majority, seventy-one per cent of reporting entities, offer GEWE capacity building and training opportunities for staff members. Of concern, participation in training activities is mandatory in less than half of the reporting entities, making it difficult to determine whether those most in need are in fact turning out for training. Even in cases when training is mandatory, the results of these programs are formally assessed in only thirty-five per cent of the entities. In the absence of capacity-building targets and feedback in terms of professional advancement, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of GEWE capacity building.



IV. Other Findings on Architecture

UN SWAP Indicators 9, 10 and 11

As this study attempts to delve more deeply into certain components of UN-SWAP reporting, it is useful to begin with a deeper look at UN-SWAP Performance Indicators 9, 10 and 11 which go to the heart of tracking adoption of gender equality markers. UN-SWAP standards include the requirements that entities have a resourced gender unit and gender focal points or focal point teams at HQ, regional and country levels at P4 and above with written TOR and at least twenty per cent of time allocated to gender functions. In addition, to exceed requirements entities should have specific funds allocated to support gender focal point networking. “Resourced” may be defined as adequate human and financial resources to support the entities to meet their GEWE mandate including coordination, capacity development, quality assurance and inter-agency collaboration.



In the chart above, we can see the significant variation in usage and tracking across different entity types. Note that Secretariat entities are comparatively more likely to meet expectations than other entities, albeit Indicator 10 falls short. Of note, there is also a positive correlation between entities that reported “Meets” or “Exceeds” and entities that responded to our Gender Architecture and Costing Survey.

I find interesting that there is a strong correlation between PI 9, 10 and 11 for all type of entities (same patterns of meeting, exceeding, etc.), but not for the UN Secretariat with radically different patterns for each indicator.

Primary Architectural Modalities

Gender architecture at the entity level consists of gender units, gender advisors or specialists (additional to those in the gender unit or in the absence of a gender unit) and gender focal points. Entities vary significantly in their institutional arrangements for gender equality and the empowerment of women. To a certain extent these differences can be ascribed to the specific focus or mandate of the entity, with some entities citing that the nature of their mandate was not conducive to establishment of full-time gender units, as well as the size of the entity, with smaller entities relying more on gender focal points than on fully staffed gender units. In general, there is a greater level of dedicated focus at HQ than in country offices – and only a minority of respondents feature a three-tiered architecture of HQ, region and country levels. Entity size and mandate determines the type of regional and country architecture they establish internally. Resource constraints are cited as a factor inhibiting the extensive adoption of a three-tiered architecture of HQ, region and field. Within the gender focal point system, a majority of entities report some – but not all – of their gender focal points have terms of reference that specify their distinct gender mainstreaming responsibilities.

The structure of gender focal points is also quite diverse. Some entities, such as WFP, report a large number of gender focal points with quick turnover and an impossibility to be in close contact with HQ. In general, entities with a three-tier structure, tend to have a much closer contact with their regional focal points, advisors/specialists or offices, rather than with the gender focal points at the country levels. This points out to the fact that staff implementing the gender mainstreaming function at the country level do not report necessarily to the gender unit at HQ but to the regions or programmatic Units.

Architectural Modalities by Entity Type

Gender Mainstreaming

The importance of clearly delineating GEWE terminology was apparent throughout our work on gender architecture. Surveys alone do not fully capture the critical distinctions in practice that affect daily operations. The term “gender mainstreaming” is one such expression that must be defined before diving deeper into the findings on architectural modalities. Specifically, some entities distinguish between gender mainstreaming as defining two separate types of work: 1) Gender equality-targeted work, where the main objective of the programme is GEWE; and 2) Gender equality-targeted work, which implies integrating gender perspectives into programmes that are not at their core focused on GEWE. Some entities, however, consider only the latter prong of work when explaining gender mainstreaming. As with other survey questions that may (and did) raise questions about what data to provide, one’s understanding of the meaning of gender mainstreaming is an example that – if not clarified – may lead to a misunderstanding of the architectural components of GEWE within an entity.

Gender Units

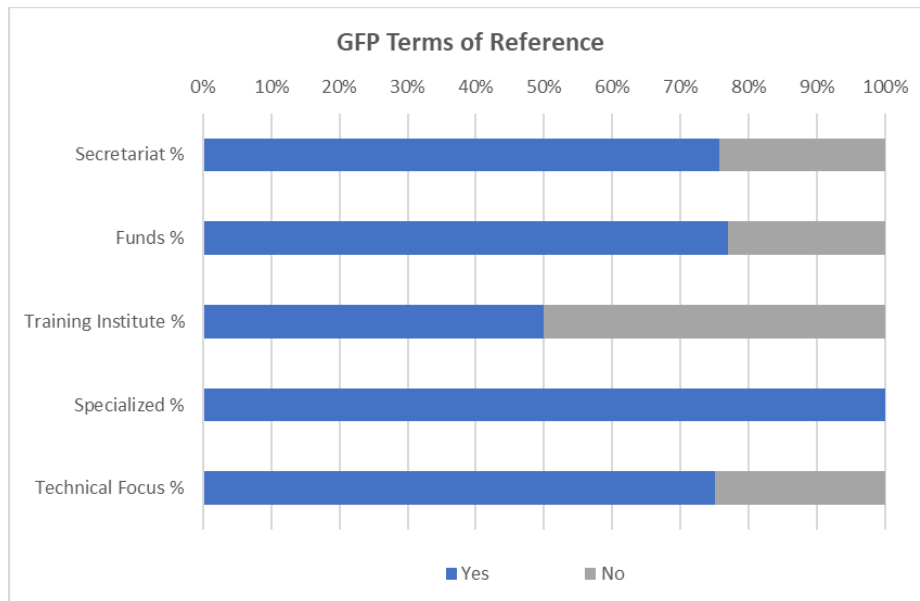
Gender unit personnel are those individuals working in organizational units coordinating work on GEWE and providing strategic support for development of policies, projects, capacity building and strategic initiatives, etc. Thirty of the forty-nine reporting entities have gender units. While integrating gender perspectives into the wider body of programmes and policies of the organization can be assigned to a gender specialist or to an office, the role of the gender unit (as custodian of the entity's entire gender policy to ensure coherence and consistency in procedures, capacity building and overall planning, monitoring, and reporting) is reported to be critical to success. Some gender units have noted a lack of investment at the HQ level, which directly undermines the effectiveness of staff working on GEWE in the field. Locating, connecting and resourcing the gender unit at the HQ level adequately has a direct impact in the systemic implementation of the gender mainstreaming function.

Gender Advisors

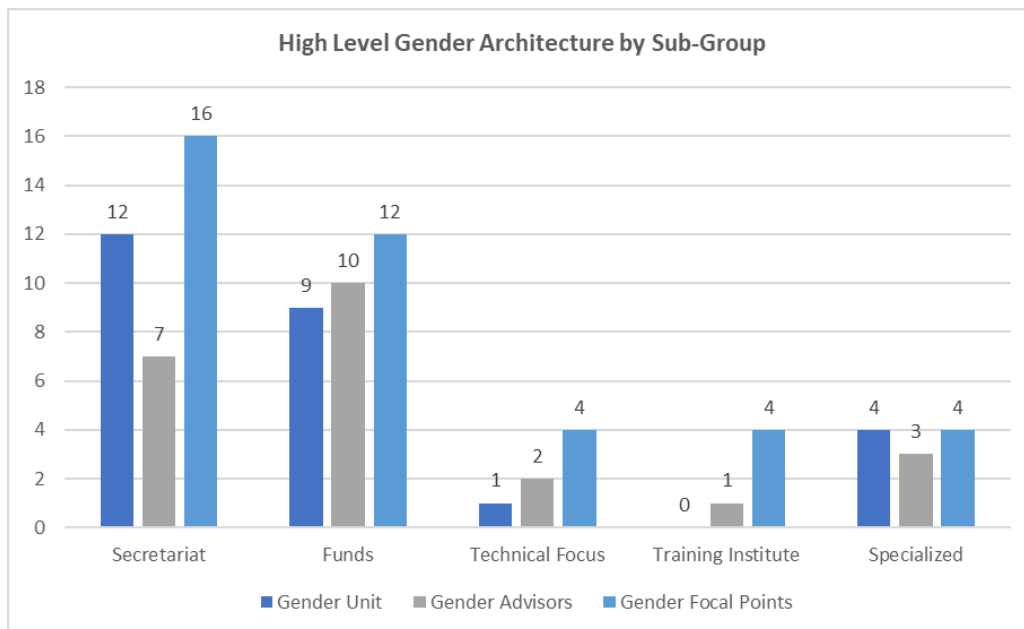
Gender advisor personnel are individuals working fulltime outside of a gender unit (ex. Field-based gender advisers or individual gender advisers at HQ level in entities with no gender unit) to ensure gender perspectives are integrated across functional and substantive areas. Gender advisors are reported with the least prevalence. In general, there is a greater level of activity at HQ than in country offices – and only a minority of respondents feature a three-tiered architecture of HQ, region and country activity.

Gender Focal Points

Gender focal point personnel are resource persons within offices, departments and units tasked to raise awareness on gender-related issues and promote gender mainstreaming – both at the level where gender equality and the empowerment of women represents the main objective of a programme, as well as in cases where gender equality and the empowerment of women is not necessarily central to the specific programme but is adeptly integrated into all aspects of the programme. Gender focal points dedication to gender issues is partial, with less than 100% of their time is allocated to gender issues and a requirement to at least dedicate 20% of their time. Gender focal points are reported with most frequency and are most dispersed throughout the system; though (and perhaps because of the numbers of individuals involved and their frequent rotations) entities are unable to identify who, how many and/or total costing of their dedicated time. A robust network of focal points is reported as valuable for quality assurance and effective implementation of the GEWE mandates, whether at the HQ level and across different organizational departments, or whether at the regional and country level architecture of the entity. It is equally noted however, that this function is often simply assigned as a voluntary additional function over and above the other work of the staff member. In other words, gender focal points are expected to undertake gender equality functions as an add-on voluntary time commitment.



Referring to entities with a three-tier structure (HQ, regions and countries) -- With only thirty of the responding entities reporting on the existence of a gender unit, it is worth noting that the majority of gender units (sixteen) are located in Secretariat entities, followed by funds (nine). Further, the majority of gender units and gender advisors are located in the headquarters offices, with gender focal points more often well-dispersed into the country offices.



GEWE Influence within the Entity

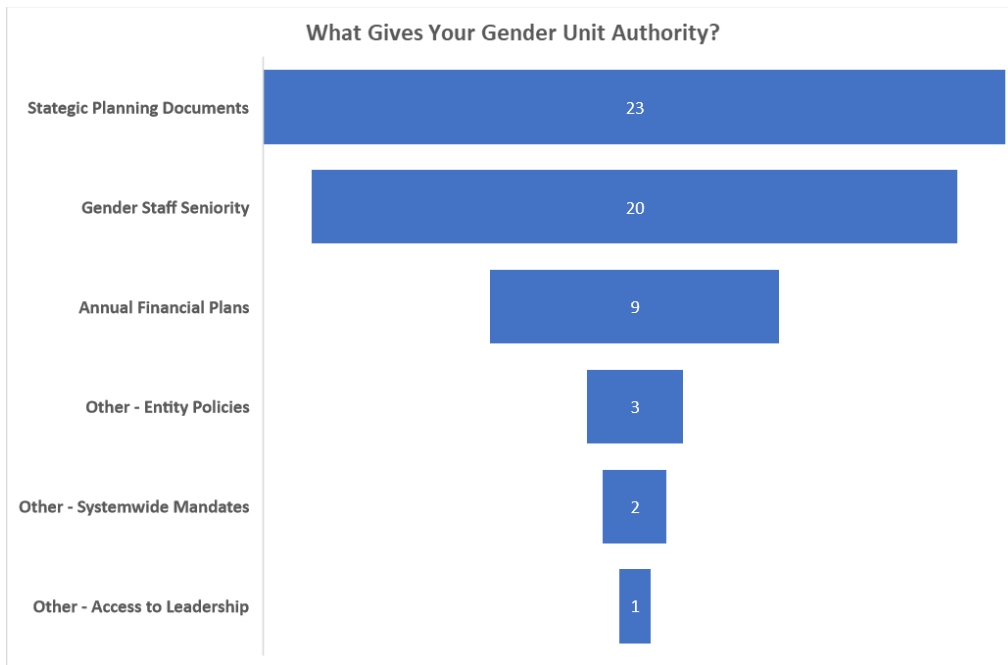
As noted in the highlighted findings section at the top of this report, location, and reporting lines matter for gender mainstreaming. Location of the function dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women matters in terms of role, budget, and influence. Those located in the front office report to the Head of the Office or Chief of Staff. While that signals capacity to influence decisions and global policies, it also means lack of specific budget line and the overall notion that front offices are not “spending units.” Entities with this function at the programmatic level will report to the Programme Director or Head of a specific section. Being located in the program section implies having at least a generic gender program and specific budget allocated / earmarked for that. While this entails some distance with the head of the entity, it brings the possibility of using the budget line for funding seed projects within the gender focal point network, and therefore strengthen join, multisectoral action and network coherence.

Other than funding, key drivers that enhance the authority of gender units include a combination of these elements: having a Strategic Plan that provides for gender unit involvement in GEWE policy and decision-making; allowing for senior level gender staff and/or direct reporting lines to senior leadership; and allocating a portion of the Annual Financial Plan to GEWE budget items.

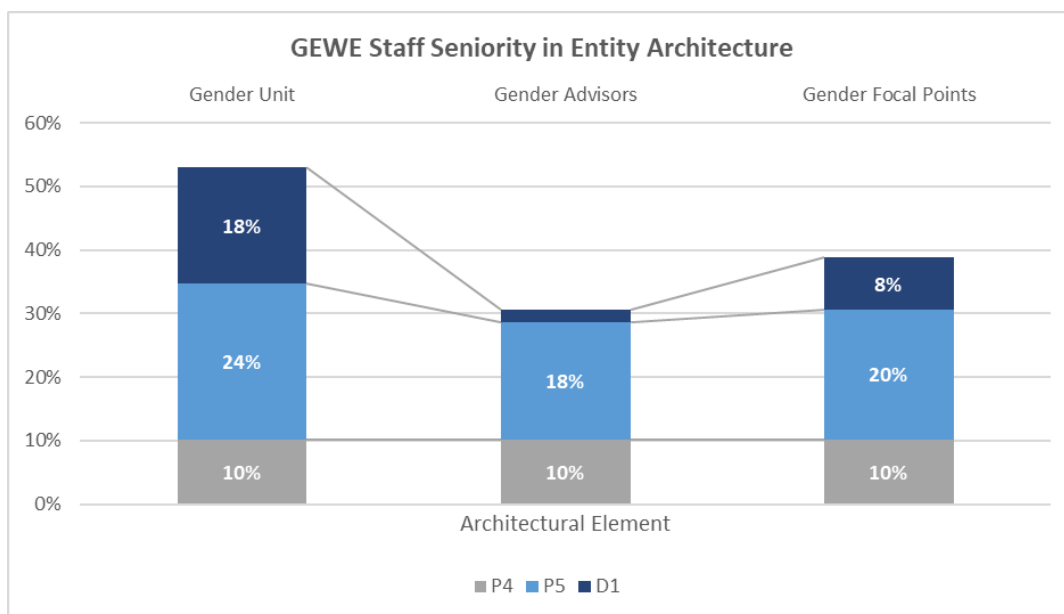
In addition to the allocation of resources to GEWE budget items, it may be possible to delineate (by entity size and/or activity) which entities should develop an internal gender unit, and which could more effectively work through gender advisors and/or gender focal points.

More than forty per cent of reporting entities (20 entities) cite gender staff seniority and/or access to leadership as central to gender unit authority and impact. Other sources of “authority” are related ⁴ to being the custodian of a unique source of data in the organization, outstanding civil society support, strong interagency ties, or critical expertise for the organization. Entities were allowed to pick several from among the options for what provides authority, thus the figures in the chart below do not add to the thirty reported gender units.

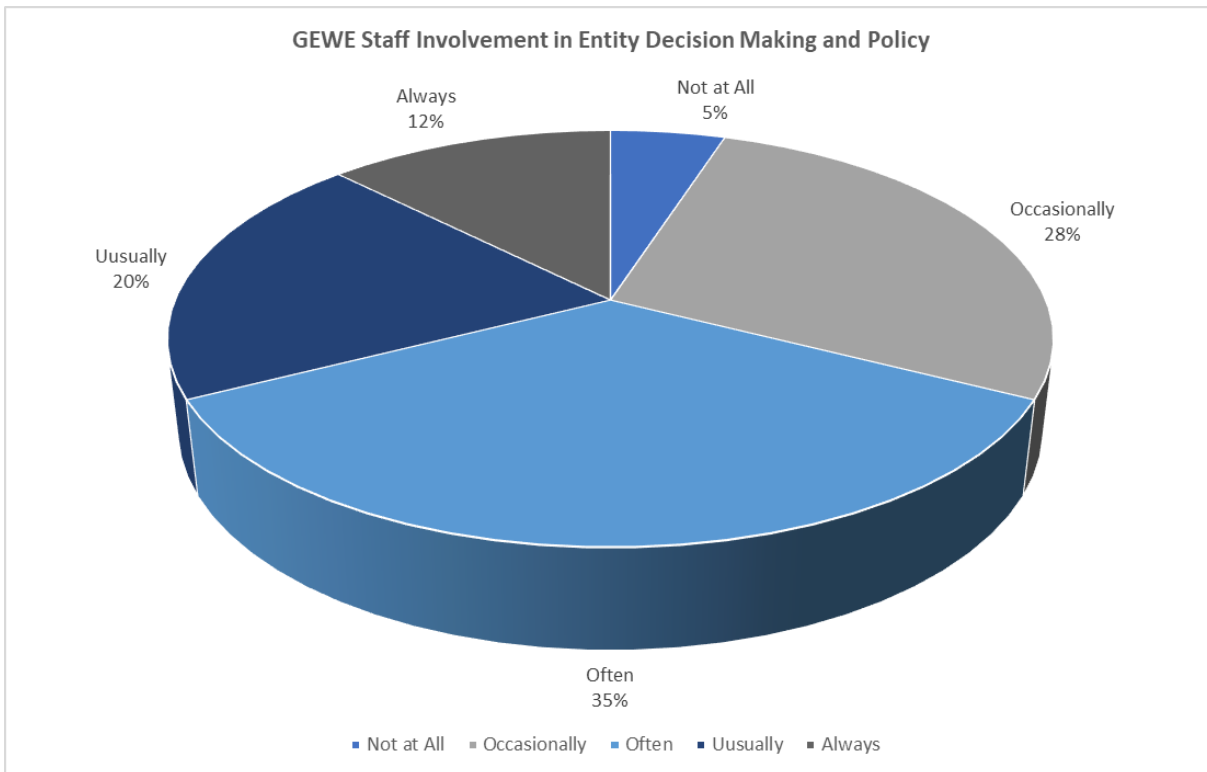
⁴ A recent UNU study corroborates these findings: UNU research on What Works in Gender and Health in the UN: <https://www.genderhealthhub.org/articles/the-power-of-evidence/>



A deeper dive into architecture indicates that some fifty per cent of gender unit personnel are P4 and higher and forty per cent are P5 and above – senior rankings. This could be a positive trend deserving further analysis. Senior level staff may be more likely to be included in critical organization-wide meetings and their opinions are more likely to be heard at those meetings.



We asked entities to share, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (always), the degree to which GEWE staff engages in key decisions. The results are mixed across responding entities, though it is a concern that 33% of responders cite either no involvement at all or only occasional involvement of GEWE staff in decision making and policy formation.



That noted, it may be recalled that entities did not frequently cite access to leadership as a primary driver for gender unit authority -- at least in the initial more statistically-driven data collection survey. In the second round of discussions with selected larger institutions, this result came under scrutiny in that several respondents cited access to leadership as instrumental in the effectiveness of the entity in promoting GEWE.

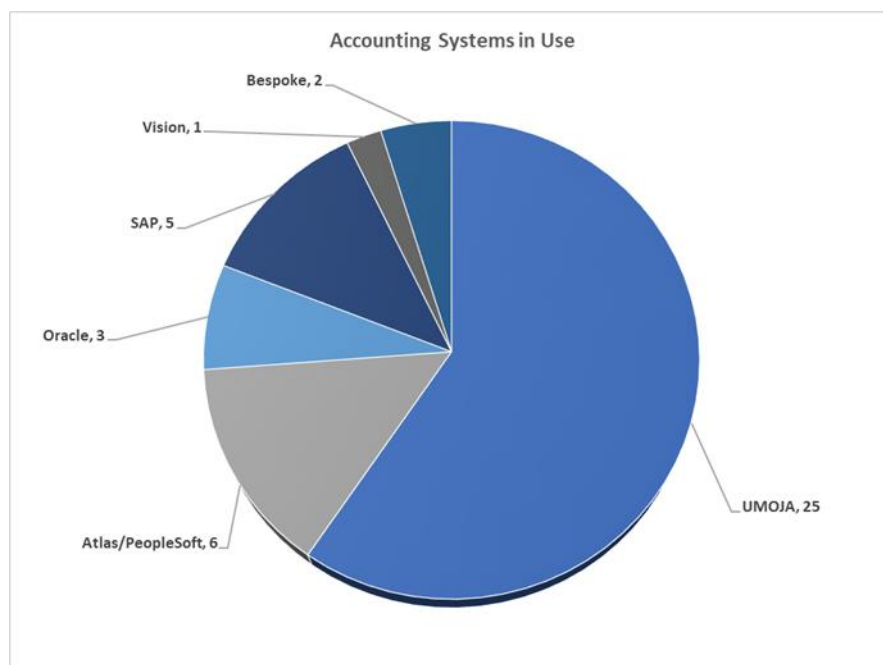
V. Findings on the Gender Equality Marker

Pioneered by the OECD-DAC and established in 2013 by the UNDG as a system to track investments in GEWE, the gender equality marker has been proven to be a strong accountability tool for documenting trends in planned results and their corresponding budget allocation and/or expenditure over time. They have also helped to raise awareness of gender equality dimensions of project planning and results. In line with the recommendations emanating from the UN Secretary-General High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality in 2019, UN Women's support seeks to ensure common approaches and definitions as well as system-wide implementation. Subsequent guidance has been produced to tackle quality assurance issues and fine-tune coding definitions.

As part of the UN-SWAP, consistency and harmonization across entities is important, since the data is compiled, aggregated, and analyzed as part of the Secretary-General's annual report on mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs in the UN system. In 2019, the High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality introduced important recommendations in support of a harmonized and uniform implementation of gender markers and financial targets across the UN system, including the requirement of a four-point scale gender equality marker embedded in the entity's ERP system to be applied to budget allocations and expenditures at activity and output levels and reported annually to Senior Management, Donors and Governing Bodies. Helpdesk services have been established to support UN entities in the implementation of harmonized financial tracking mechanisms in alignment with their own financial systems and specific mandates.

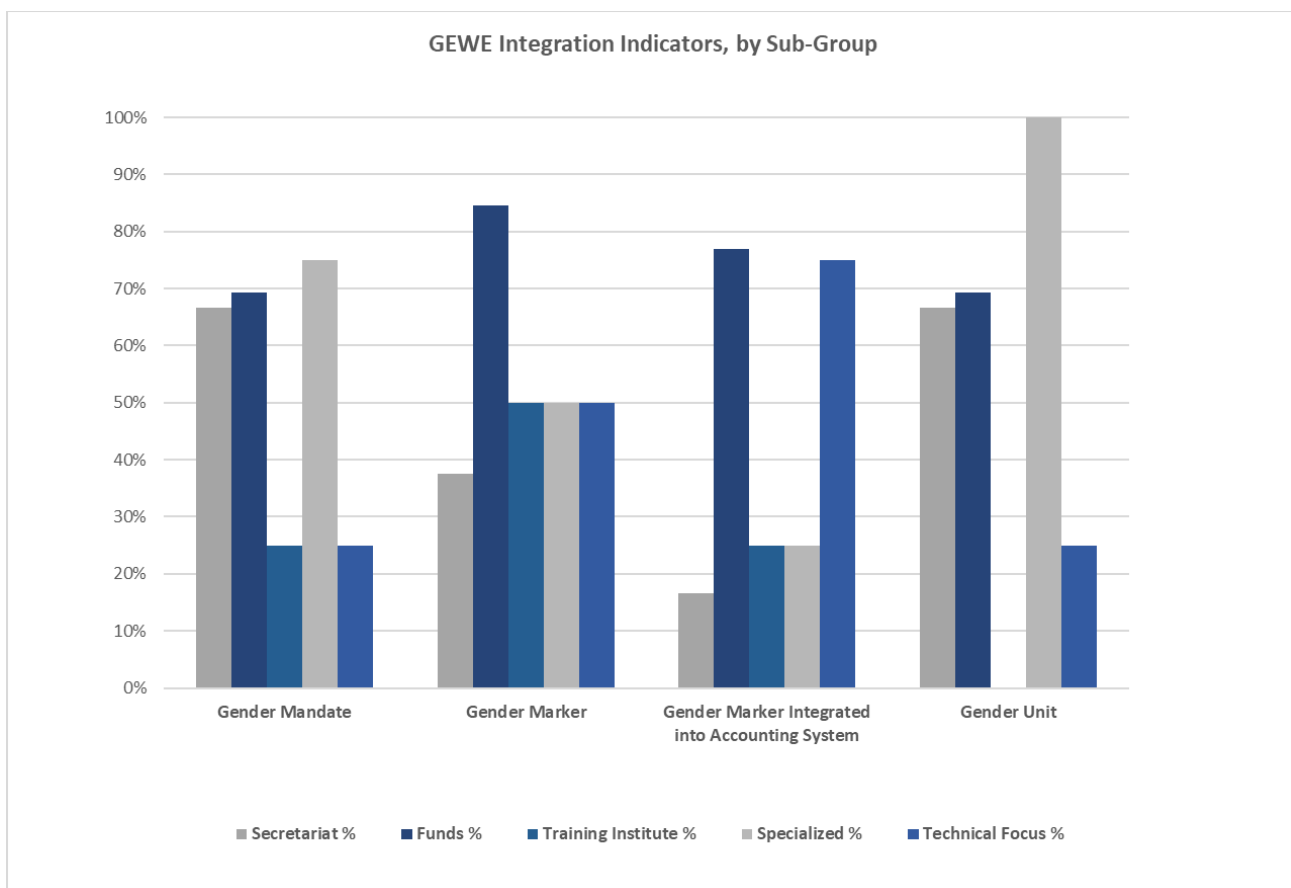
Implementation of Gender Equality Markers and Accounting Systems

The standards defined by the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Financing for Gender Equality require that the gender equality marker is a four-point scale tool embedded in the entity's financial system. Difficulties in modifying and working within entity ERP systems are cited as an obstacle to full implementation of the gender equality marker, including the monitoring and reporting of GEWE data in ways that are trackable across entities. A majority of entities cite timing and/or costing challenges in modifying the fields for the gender equality marker into system architecture and reporting templates that provide for meaningful tracking of GEWE costing at the planning and output levels of programmatic initiatives. Even if all entities were to implement a deeper level of reportability for the gender equality marker, evaluation across a standardized set of parameters is likely to be problematic due to the previously discussed typology differences as well as myriad ERP systems in place across entities, some of which are described as being easier to program with the required gender equality marker than others.

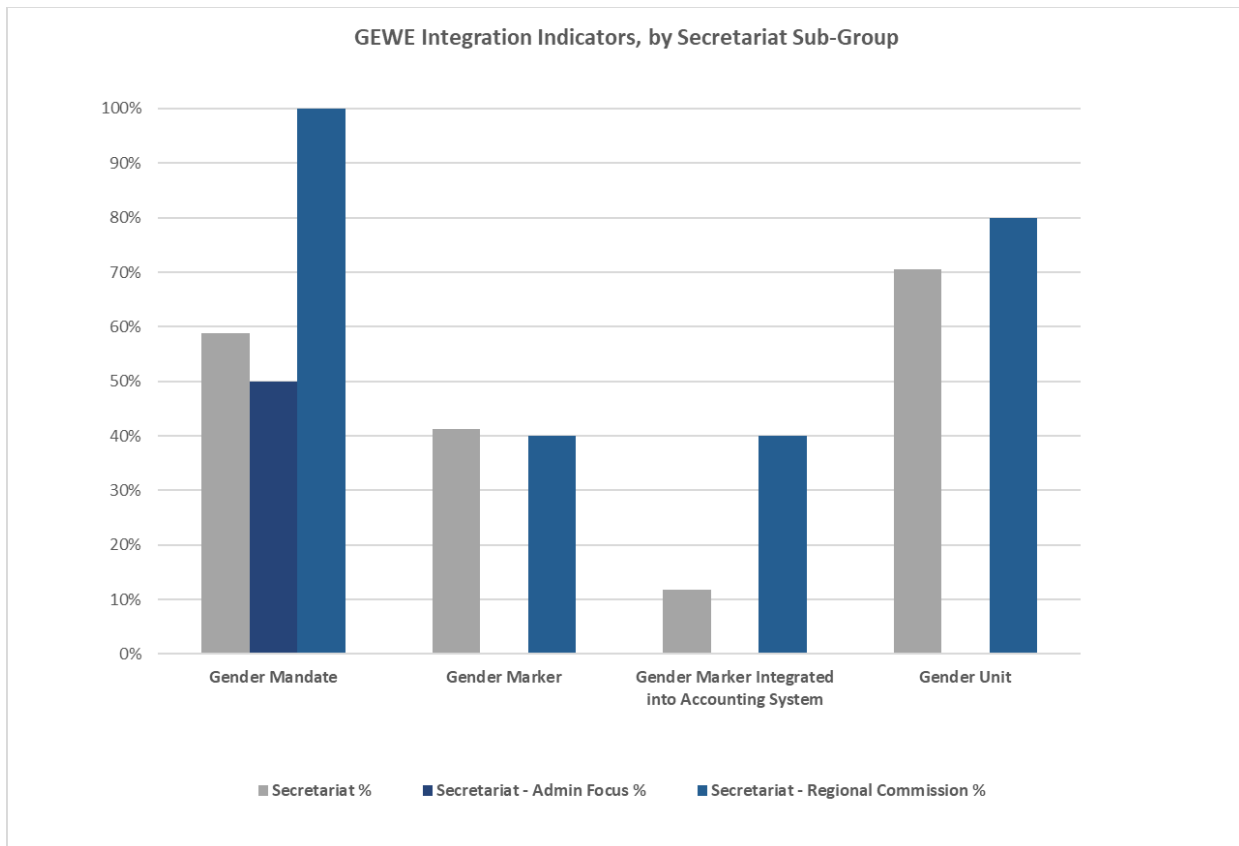


Entity Typologies and GEWE Integration

Our survey work tracked the progress of entities in implementing certain GEWE “milestones” which included, among others: 1) the adoption of a gender mandate; 2) the use of a gender marker; 3) the integration of a gender marker into the entity’s accounting system; and 4) the establishment of a gender unit. While there are additional critical markers, as well as variations among these broad categories, the survey analysis included tracking which of these milestones had been adopted across entities by typology, funding, and by size. Generally, these GEWE “milestones” were more prevalent in entities that reflected greater human and financial resource availability -- such as in certain the Secretariat entities and in Funds & Programmes. In the case of the latter, external partners and stakeholders may sharpen the UN Fund & Programme gender focus in response to increased or issue-specific prioritization by these entities.



Uptake of these GEWE milestones was further revealed to be dependent upon – with Secretariat agencies – the typology of Secretariat agency. Those with a significant programmatic focus and Regional Commissions had integrated GEWE milestones more deeply into their organizations. Secretariat entities with a mainly Administrative Focus -- among the few that responded to the survey -- provided the least amount of detail on GEWE architecture and costing, reflecting either a low degree of GEWE integration or inability to capture this data efficiently in the manner and timeframe requested, as expected given their overall mandate and functions.

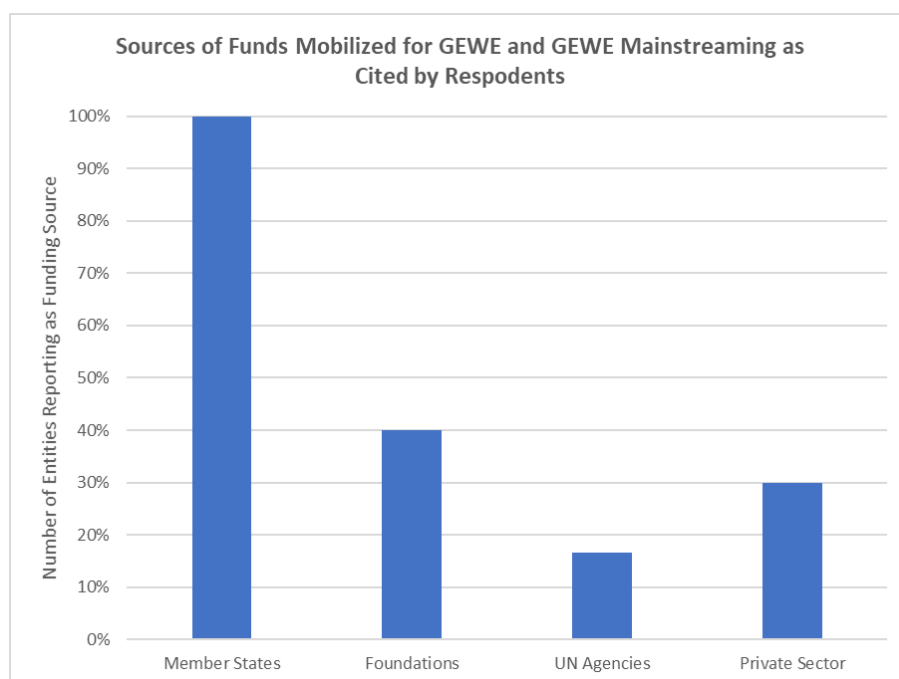


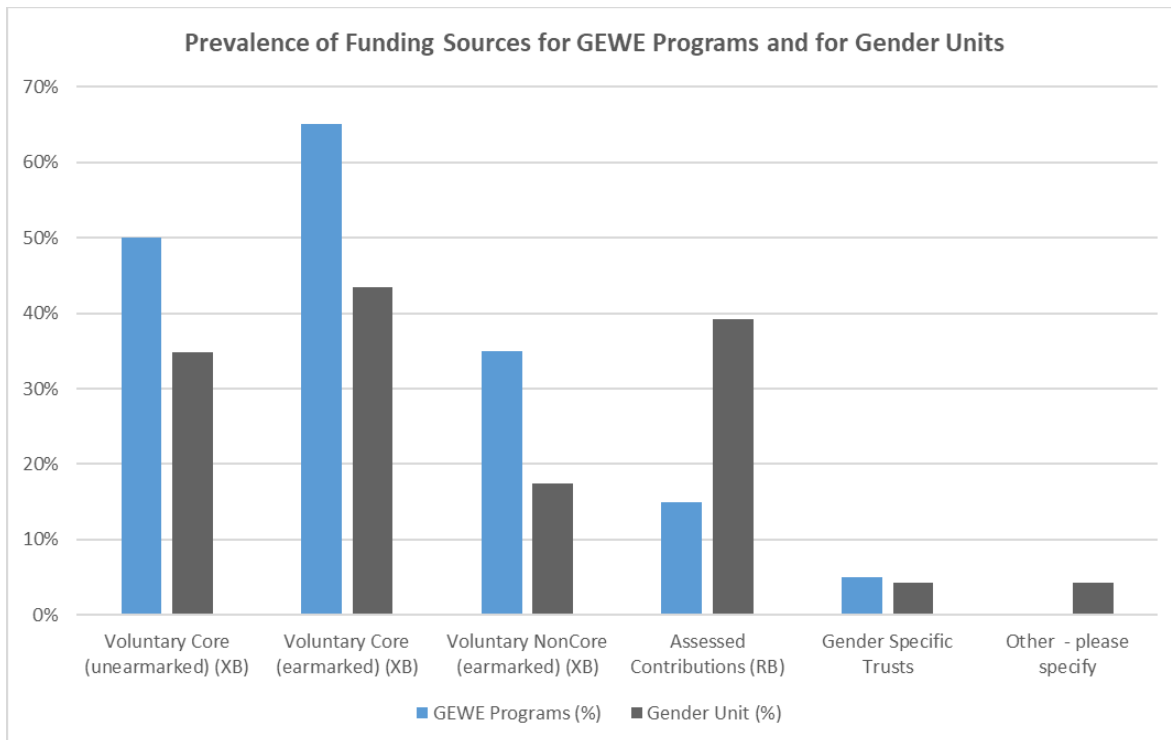
VI. Other Findings on GEWE Costing and Funding

Sources of Finding for Entity Expenditures on GEWE

In general, voluntary core funding, both earmarked and unearmarked, was the primary funding source for most agencies, for GEWE programs as well as most gender units. However, the gender units were more than twice as likely to rely on assessed contributions to cover funding requirements. Among those reporting funding from voluntary unearmarked sources, the average financial resource mobilization was ~ USD1.03 million. Given incomplete financial costing data, it is difficult to determine if this amount is adequate or if an alternate approach to resource mobilization is warranted.

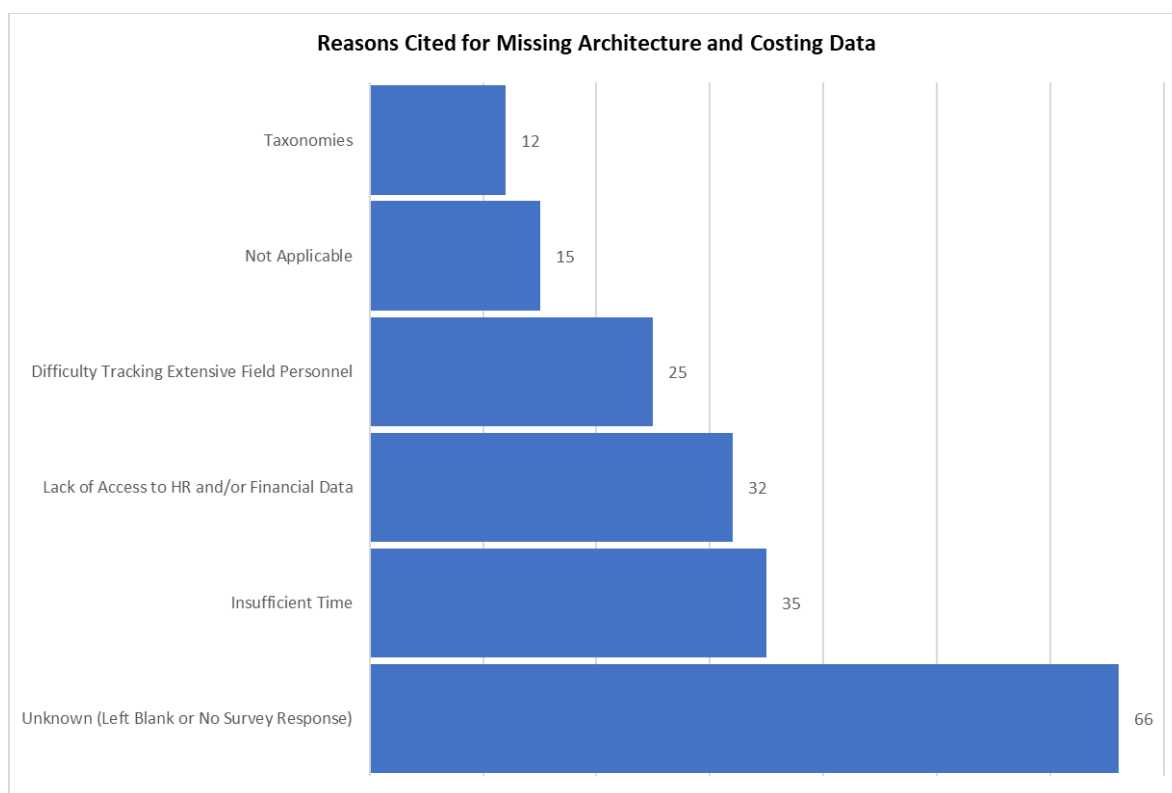
UN-SWAP reporting during January – February 2022, which included selected questions o GEWE staffing and budgeting – are presently being analyzed and may add additional context to this work which will be incorporated into subsequent reports on architecture and costing.





Difficulties Responding to Costing Questions

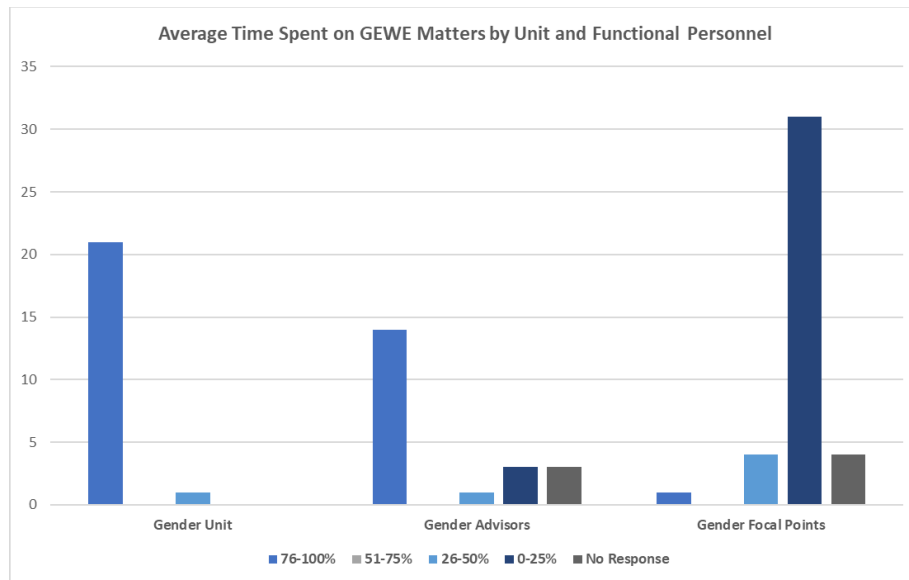
Several reasons appear to underly the difficulty in providing comprehensive and reliable GEWE costing benchmark data. Among the most common reasons cited in survey responses and follow-up phone interviews were insufficient time, lack of access, and uncertainty as to definitions (driven in part by varying terminology across entities). Some of the challenges cited overlapped within these broader reasons.



GEWE Staffing and Spending as Compared to Overall Staffing and Spending in the Entity

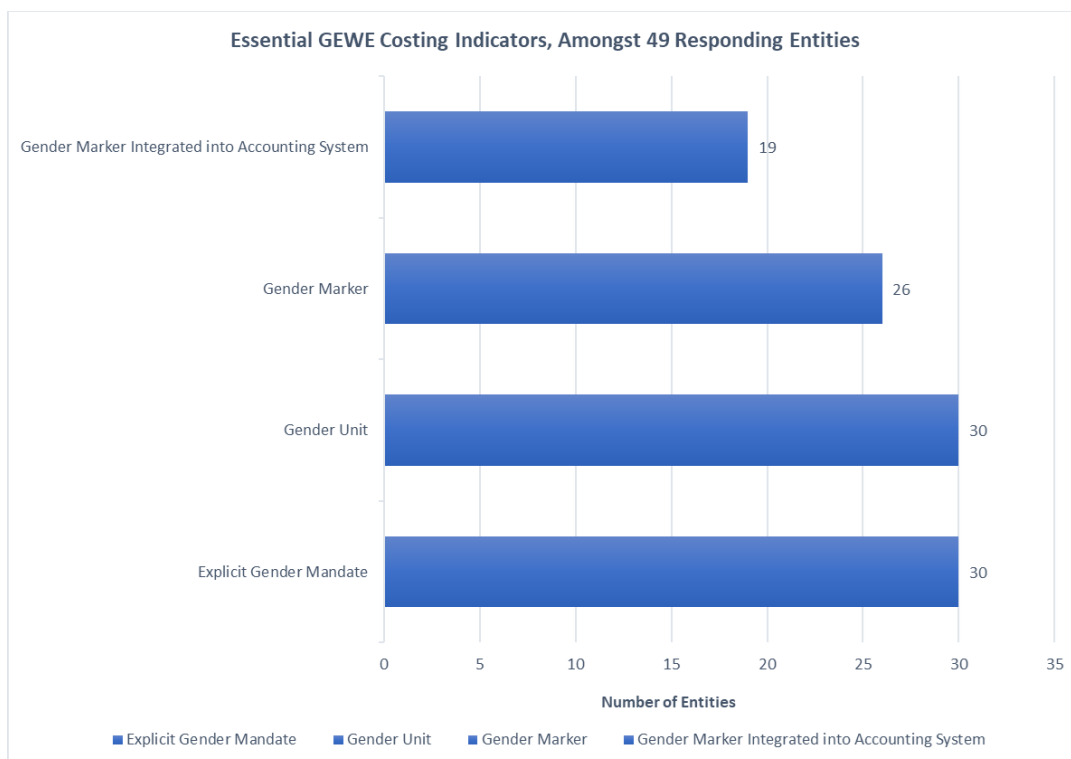
In terms of absolute staff numbers, given the difficulties reported in costing for GEWE staff, gender units average about six individuals across the UN system, with one entity reporting a gender unit comprised of a single individual. Entity deployment of gender advisors is so rare as to render numbers negligible as compared to the entity overall. Of the entities reporting gender advisors on staff, the average number is twenty-three, with a high figure submitted of 342 and a low figure (from those relying upon gender advisors) of just one individual. Gender focal points are well dispersed systemwide, but costing information is scant. In terms of absolute numbers, the largest entity gender focal point network is 893 individuals with the smallest being two individuals labeled as gender focal points. The average gender focal point network size across all reporting entities is sixty-one.

Bearing in mind that most gender focal points dedicate twenty-five per cent of their time, on average, to gender-related work, it becomes more complicated to calculate the costs attributable specifically to GEWE activity. Additionally, the gender focal points system does not report to the gender unit increasing the complications of tracking numbers, identity, and costing.



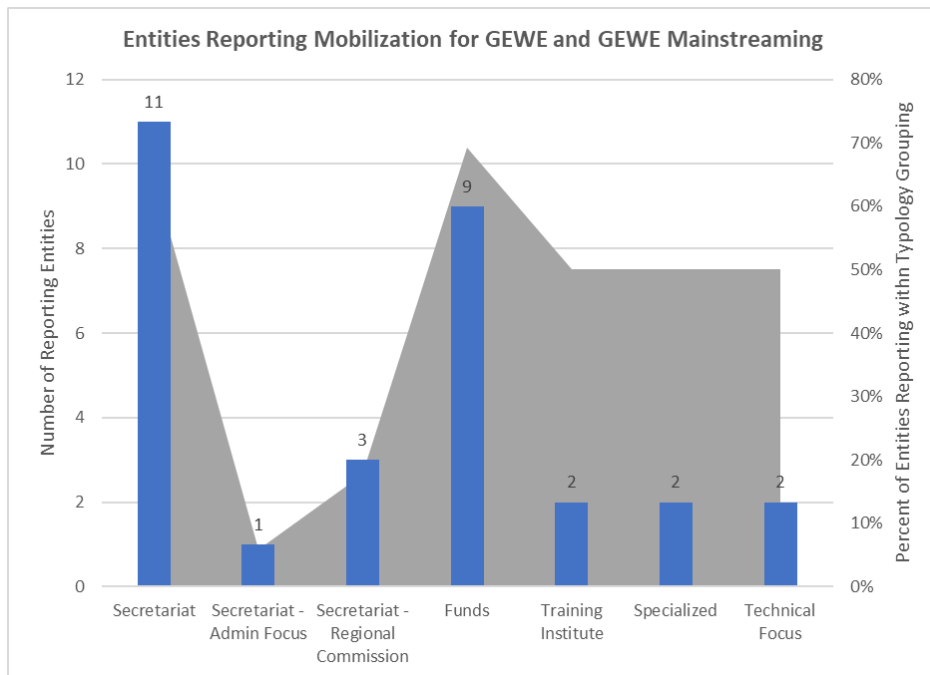
Progression and Dispersion of Financial GEWE Standards

Primary GEWE indicators -- not just the Gender Equality Marker -- follow a certain “progression” reflective of least-resourced to most robustly resourced. For example, thirty reporting entities acknowledge having an explicit gender mandate in place. The use of the gender equality marker is the next most reported GEWE indicator, however, diverse types of entities use the marker to accomplish different objectives: to report on gender equality and gender architecture activities within the entity; to report on GEWE activities related to programs and activities; and as part of a project/program gender-related screening process.



Mobilization of Funding for GEWE by Typology

Generally, Secretariat departments and offices and Funds & Programmes – some of the largest entities in the system, reported that some degree of funding was mobilized for GEWE-specific programming.



VII. Possible Recommendations

Managing the Gender Remit

Broader inclusion agendas addressing multiple inequalities (i.e., disability, indigenous, LGBTQI), without a corresponding increase in resources, risk diluting the time and resources gender units and gender staff can dedicate to gender equality. Nearly 40% of the UN entities surveyed reported the expansion of gender unit work portfolios. Confirming this trend, 2022 UN-SWAP report showed that 22 out of 45 (49%) Gender Units address multiple cross-cutting issues. It will be important to ensure that resources and access to expertise are increased and monitored in accordance with the expanding mandates and responsibilities of gender unit personnel.

Evolving and Bespoke Staffing Standards

The rise of entity-specific standards can be change drivers. Some entities, like ILO, are workforce focused, with GEWE influencing both HR and programming. Others, like UNHCR, involve integrating gender into a broader social protection mandate. An additional standard that may be considered – that speak directly to the issues surfaced on GEWE costing – could relate to targeting a minimum of funding to be secured through core or predictable funding, so that there can be a continuity in the GEWE function. It is worth considering whether developing a typology guidance will assist in providing guidance on GEWE, versus a one-size fits all approach. Staffing standards should include a reflection on location for a more effective implementation of the mandate. Some of the entities with GEWE located in front offices are now establishing a thematic fund to channel resources to the network of gender focal points in different sections and departments. Focal points can then improve the integration of gender concerns in overall portfolios or develop targeted actions.

Balancing Seniority, Funding, and Persistence

Over the past years, since the implementation of UN-SWAP standards (gender focal points appointed at a P4 level and above with TORs including at least a 20%-time dedication and, for larger entities, a fully resourced gender unit in accordance to their mandate) entities have moved from what could have originally been described as a “reactive” move toward appointing a gender focal point or establishing a unit, to the “organic development” of thoughtful and well-integrated gender policies and plans. Notwithstanding the above, field-based fulltime gender Advisors were reported with least prevalence and gender Focal Points with most frequency. Entities reported a decreasing funding for central gender units, weakening important functions related to coherence, capacity building and strengthened point network. Baselines and benchmarks on gender equality staffing are being adopted in some entities (by 25% of UN entities) – both larger and better resourced, as well as smaller entities with fewer resources available, while the majority (64%) lack them. It may be effective to adopt entity-specific minimum standards and benchmarks on gender equality staffing. Targeting a minimum share of funding for staffing should be considered so that there can be continuity in gender equality functions. These standards can be change drivers and have been successfully implemented across entities of varying sizes, budgets and missions. Entity size, regional architecture and type of mandate are key determinants to define an optimal gender architecture.

Location Matters

Most entities reflected on the importance of location and reporting lines in terms of influence/power, access to decision-making and/or budget. Some of the gender units located in front offices are now establishing a thematic fund to channel resources to the network of gender focal points in different sections and departments. While gender parity focal points were overwhelmingly located in HR divisions, a majority of UN entities were unable to produce an organigram indicating the location of the central gender unit or gender mainstreaming resources in the organization and are largely unable to identify the total costing of staffing. It is important to ask whether staffing standards should include a reflection on location for a more effective implementation of the mandate. Location needs to be paired with functional reporting lines for access to interagency mechanisms and internal committees.

Accountability

The most obvious UN-SWAP performance indicators on institutional performance on gender equality include having an explicit gender result in the Strategic Plan, an updated gender policy or a gender unit. UN entities have made important strides concerning gender results in their Strategic Plans (45 entities) and gender policies (57 entities). Concerning dedicated human and financial resources, while 45 entities (63%) met or exceeded UN-SWAP requirements for the gender architecture, fewer did for financial tracking mechanisms and financial allocations (18 and 23, respectively). It should be considered whether increasing quality and accuracy of financial tracking for programmes and human resources can support a meaningful discussion of systemwide funding for gender equality in the face of static or declining budgets.

Negligible Overall Levels of Spending for GEWE in the Context of Overall Entity Spending

A majority of entities have low levels of GEWE budgeting and spending, with only a small fraction of total UN entity resources dedicated to gender equality staff and programming. Overwhelmingly, UN entities have great difficulty in tracking and reporting on expenditures on gender equality -- both in terms of staffing and programming. Entities faced challenges with access, transparency, consistency of definitions, varying year-ends, and methods of reporting. Data collection has shown varying degrees of costing levels across entities of similar nature proving that size and core mandates are not inevitably correlated with funding for gender equality. It is important to reflect upon the overall gender architecture require parallel discussions on the appropriate financial benchmark for the gender equality function in a UN entity. Staffing and financial standards can guide budgetary decisions signaling the relevance of the gender equality mandate within the entity's strategic priorities. As several participating entities have shown, size, core missions and funding are not inevitably correlated with an entity's ability to move GEWE front and center. Expectations may need to be lowered in terms of the quantity of data collected on costing and/or the ability to meaningfully compare collected data across entities.

Language Taxonomies and Gender Association

How we communicate – the words and phrasing we choose – plays a significant role in how information is perceived by the target audience. Taxonomies developed by gender specialists may be hard for non-specialized

staff, including some GFPs, to understand as a whole or in the context of their agency's operations and administration. Taxonomies presenting particular challenges for this survey included: Financial Data (Revenue, Budget, Income, Expenditures); Staffing Data (Full-time versus Part-Time, Gender Titles, JPO); Funding Source Data, e.g., (Voluntary Core, unearmarked, XB, versus Voluntary Core, earmarked, XB, Voluntary Non-Core, earmarked, XB, Assessed Contributions, RB, Gender Specific Trusts). Furthermore, the implications of varying understandings of phrases such as "gender mainstreaming" as discussed elsewhere in this report are of critical importance for the conveyance and understanding of GEWE architecture, influence and costing.

Future Surveys

The importance of collecting, analyzing, and reporting on GEWE progress is a virtuous cycle. That said, it may be useful to consider other UN-wide survey and reporting requirements when determining the period for the next iteration of Gender Architecture mapping and costing work. The transversal nature of the data requested (financial, architectural/organizational design, human resources, and more) made data collection and analysis challenging. Time was a factor, as was seniority. Improved buy-in from above is critical to marshal transversal resources. What is the global picture of data collection and reporting throughout the year in these entities – how many surveys and administrative exercises are the GEWE people responsible for and when? Further integration with UN- SWAP should be examined.

Next Steps / Future Work

As with any long-term process of data collection, analysis and in-depth discussions the gender architecture and costing work has been enormously revealing – both in terms of information gleaned on architecture and costing and, equally, in terms of those areas that deserve a "deeper dive" through subsequent roundtables and short-form reports.

Some of these areas include: The implications of expanding gender remits – how are entities balancing the additional requirements with largely static resources and what lessons are being learned; Emerging gender standards – what is working, what enabling conditions are required, and what does success look like? Are there meaningful ways to collect costing data systemwide, given size and typology differences?

VIII. Feedback

Costing: “We have had specific challenges completing the budget information in view of the biennial budgets of the UN Secretariat. It did not allow simply dividing the biennial budgets in half since it is not always possible to simply divide the biennial expenditures in half (unspent funds in the first year of the biennium can still be spent in the second year). Moving forward, we will have less of this issue since the UN Secretariat has moved to annual budgets starting in 2020.”

Parity: “We have at a high level, two units - one internally-facing focused on diversity and inclusion and one externally-facing focused on refugees. GEWE activity in both is mainstreamed, unlike in 2018 when the entity first began mainstreaming. As a result, we do not break out GEWE expenditures in the manner captured in this survey.”

Gender Markers: “To maintain quality assurance over the Gender Marker coding system, we are aligned with OECD-DAC conditions and closely working with UNIDO’s Quality Monitoring Division to track Gender Marker data; the Gender Compliance and Marker Form is also developed with input from gender focal points and the Quality Monitoring Division.”

Expanding Remits: “We will be shifting from a dedicated Gender Coordination Unit to ‘Gender, Diversity and Social Inclusion Unit.’ Our priority has been on advocating for resources for the changes to the unit – our dramatically expanded scope and multiple thematic areas (SOGIESC, Youth and Aging, Disability, Race and Ethnicity, Indigenous Peoples, and Social Inclusion) is more than overwhelming ...”

Gender Staffing/Influence: “I have been “acting” FP for gender in HR since my supervisor retired. There is no mention of this in my PD and very little in my performance appraisal and it goes without saying that this is on top of my normal work unrelated to HR work on gender. Any supporting information such as highlighting which other agencies have resources officially dedicated to gender in HR would be most appreciated so that I can advocate internally for a positive change.”

Survey Participation: “I reached out twice to my colleagues in Finance and HR, but they were not particularly responsive. Some of them are on holiday. Those who are not on holiday are extremely busy replacing their colleagues and not particularly willing and able to engage in extra activities.”