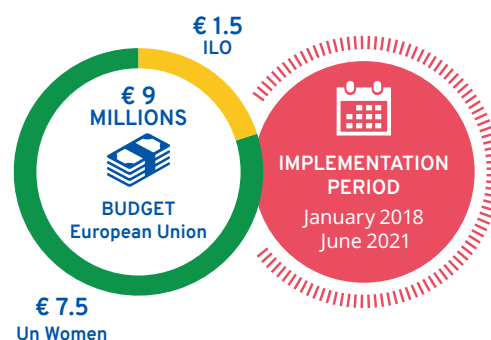


► MID-TERM INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF “WIN-WIN: GENDER EQUALITY MEANS GOOD BUSINESS”

► Main objective

Win-Win Programme is jointly implemented by UN Women (UNW) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in partnership with the European Union (EU) and pretends to contribute to the economic empowerment of women, recognizing them as beneficiaries and partners of growth and development, by increasing commitment of private sector to gender equality and women's empowerment and strengthening the capacities of companies and employer's organizations to implement these commitments. Targeting women led enterprises and networks in Europe and selected Latin American and Caribbean countries, the Programme promotes business links, joint ventures and innovation between women from both regions, while supporting inter-regional dialogue and exchange of good practices.

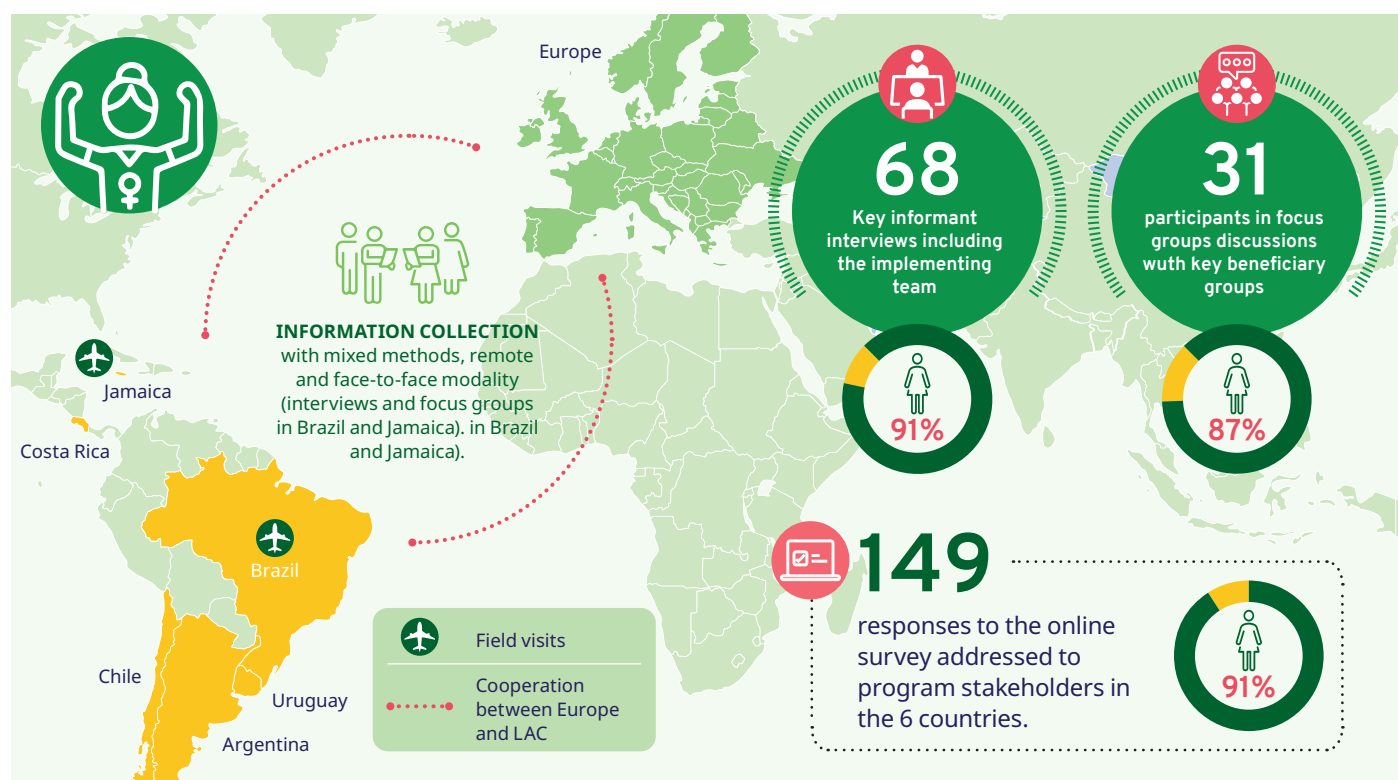


► Intervention Strategy and Theory of Change

The project is implemented in six countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Uruguay) through activities that seek to contribute to three major results: (1) support women led business in Europe and LAC to increase cooperation and expand opportunities to boost their leadership and to strengthen the case of gender equality as good business, 2) stimulate good practices to create a sustainable model of gender sensitive private sector engagement to support SDG achievement, 3) increase bi-regional women led innovation and business ventures through the establishment of an innovative financing facility as a sustainable financing model.

► Evaluation methodology

Joint, independent, utilization-focused, formative, gender-responsive and rights-oriented evaluation. The evaluation was informed by “Most Significant Change” thinking, which balances assessment against planned results and outputs with an open-ended approach to identifying the perspectives of key stakeholders, especially beneficiaries, about the effects of an intervention.



► Findings



There is strong approval among external stakeholders of the work carried out within the framework of the program. Programme contributions in areas such as capacity-building for women's entrepreneurship, increased awareness of the challenges that gender equality involves in the private sector and the creation of spaces for dialogue and knowledge exchange is highly valued across different stakeholders categories, including final beneficiaries. Win-Win personnel have played a key role in this recognition



However, progress towards program outcomes has been uneven. Despite the many and varied activities undertaken by the programme, progress towards new opportunities for cooperation between women-led business in Europe and LAC, measurable changes in business practices attributable to the program and the development of a durable partnership for private sector financing of gender equality and women's empowerment is still incipient.



The program has faced multiple challenges that have compromised its efficiency. Among the main challenges are the lack of a clear articulation or alignment between the expectations of the three key Programme partners – EU, ILO and UNW –, the absence of a more detailed theory of change linking activities with results, the lack of a strong communications and knowledge management strategy, delays in recruiting key personnel, and the uneven distribution of the budget between the two implementing agencies and across the three outcomes.



The program has built on the strengths of both implementing agencies, ILO and UNW Women. These strengths have allowed the program to start generate some impact among external stakeholders through its extensive outreach and convening, as well as its knowledge products, training and support activities, especially among women entrepreneurs and their associations, employers' organizations and public sector actors (Outcome 1) and among the companies adhered to the WEPs (Outcome 2). However, the program still needs to consolidate the commitment and emerging capacities of the stakeholders in achieving results at a higher level.



► Lesson learned



In the case of a complex intervention like the Win-Win Program (with interagency cooperation, outcomes that fall outside implementer's usual scope of work, wide variety of external stakeholders, and coordination across multiple countries), it is especially important to clearly and comprehensively articulate the logic underlying the theory of change, ensuring a shared and clear understanding of the link between activities and high-level results.



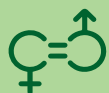
In circumstances where interventions involve large expenditures in pursuit of outcomes involving specialized expertise beyond the ordinary sphere of experience and knowledge of the implementing organizations, it is important ensuring ongoing access from the outset to relevant experts.



In programs oriented to awareness-raising, knowledge-exchange, and engagement by multiple and diverse stakeholders, it is essential ensure an appropriate communication function able to secure the implementation of a robust communications, knowledge management and visibility strategy linked to the Programme outcomes.



Programmes complex in organizational and operational terms that involve multiple and diverse stakeholders such as Win-Win are intensive in sensitive coordination and relationship-building work, which is largely invisible and often underestimated. Hence, an important lesson is that such work needs to be acknowledged, adequately resourced, and planned for, ensuring in a timely manner administrative and other support staff so time is feed up for the important coordination work.



For a program to promote gender equality in an effective, substantive and sustainable manner there is a need to reach out systematically beyond women and women's groups in order to begin addressing root causes of inequality and discriminatory gender norms through engagement with men.



► Good practices



Hiring personnel with private sector experience, familiar with private sector culture and adept at “speaking the language” of business, has proven to be a contributing factor to engaging successfully with private sector stakeholders and promoting their buy-in and participation in programme activities.



The flexibility of the Program in adapting to local conditions and working with and in tune with other similar initiatives, thus avoiding perceptions of competition, has been a positive factor for promoting stakeholder buy-in and ensuring relevant results are achieved.



Individual Programme personnel of both implementing agencies have made important efforts to take advantage of the opportunities available to share information and support each other’s work, generating and strengthening synergies and complementarity, despite the identified challenges that made this work difficult.



Through work on masculinities, on violence against women and efforts to promote parental leave for fathers, the Program has made efforts to engage men and to go beyond “empowering” women to address discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes deeply rooted in the organizational culture of the private sector and in society.



► Recommendations



Conduct a joint strategy exercise to examine the logical framework of the program to clarify the link between activities and the ultimate results to which the program seeks to contribute, identifying elements that should be prioritized in the last year of implementation.



Focus efforts on those activities and partnerships best aligned with achievement of overall outcomes and more likely to yield greater sustainability of the objectives set by the Program. This strategy should lead to strengthening alliances with existing stakeholders instead of seeking new ones, consolidating and disseminating the tools and knowledge products already generated, and capitalizing on opportunities to share, scale-up and replicate successful activities of the program across countries and regionally.



Step up efforts to build and formalize linkages between EU and LAC woman-led business and entrepreneurs, including the design of a formal networking platform and the search for opportunities to work on the progress made with RedIbero and IWCA.



Top-level programme representatives from UNW, ILO and EU must agree on realistic targets to guide efforts on Outcome 3 until the end of the Program. If the decision taken is to specify an investment mechanism, it is necessary to follow a practical approach that could involve the following strategies: build on contacts already established to engage a reliable technical advisory group that actively leads the initiative and that at turn is advised by a qualified expert in the field; reach out EU investors in keeping with the overall programme aim of facilitating business and investment linkages between EU and LAC; and evaluate the implementation of a limited initiative as a trial in one or two Program countries.



Consolidate and promote Win-Win function as a convenor and promote sustainability of results through efforts to develop and formalize the national and regional networks of the Program through the operationalization of online hubs, building on approval of and engagement with the “Win-Win” brand, that provide continuous access to the complete package of tools and information generated in the program, as well as networking and exchange opportunities among the beneficiaries.

