

Gender Transformative Change

Exploring its dimensions

Evaluation of ESCWA's Centre for Women

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia



UNITED NATIONS

الاسكوا

ESCWA

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**

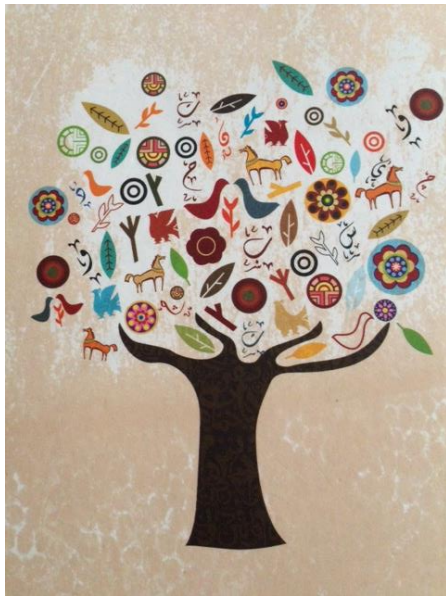
**Little
specific
literature**

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

**Partner-
ships**

First dimension



Root causes

Focus on the **binding constraints** 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



Context

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



Partnerships

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?

Evaluation ESCWA Centre for Women	
Focus	knowledge production, engagement and strategy
Criteria	relevance, effectiveness and impact
Timeframe	3,5 years (2012- mid 2015)
Model	Theory of change

Applying key dimensions

Adapt Timeframe & Questions

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

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



How were the **root causes** identified and addressed?
Was the voice of the **marginalized** integrated?



How were the **contextual challenges** integrated in the intervention?



How were the **partnerships** identified?
Was a common **broad strategic vision** developed?



New findings & recommendations: change to programme

Applying key dimensions

Revise Assumptions

Assumptions of Programme	Situation in Region	Revised Assumptions for Evaluation
Political will to promote women's rights	Little commitment, Reservations to CEDAW	Questionable political will to promote women's rights
Political situation does not deteriorate	# countries in conflict has increased	Conflict and forced migration
Political changes do not reverse acquired gains	Activity of CSO & women's machineries has gone back in some countries	Acquired gains can be reversed



Revise Theory of Change

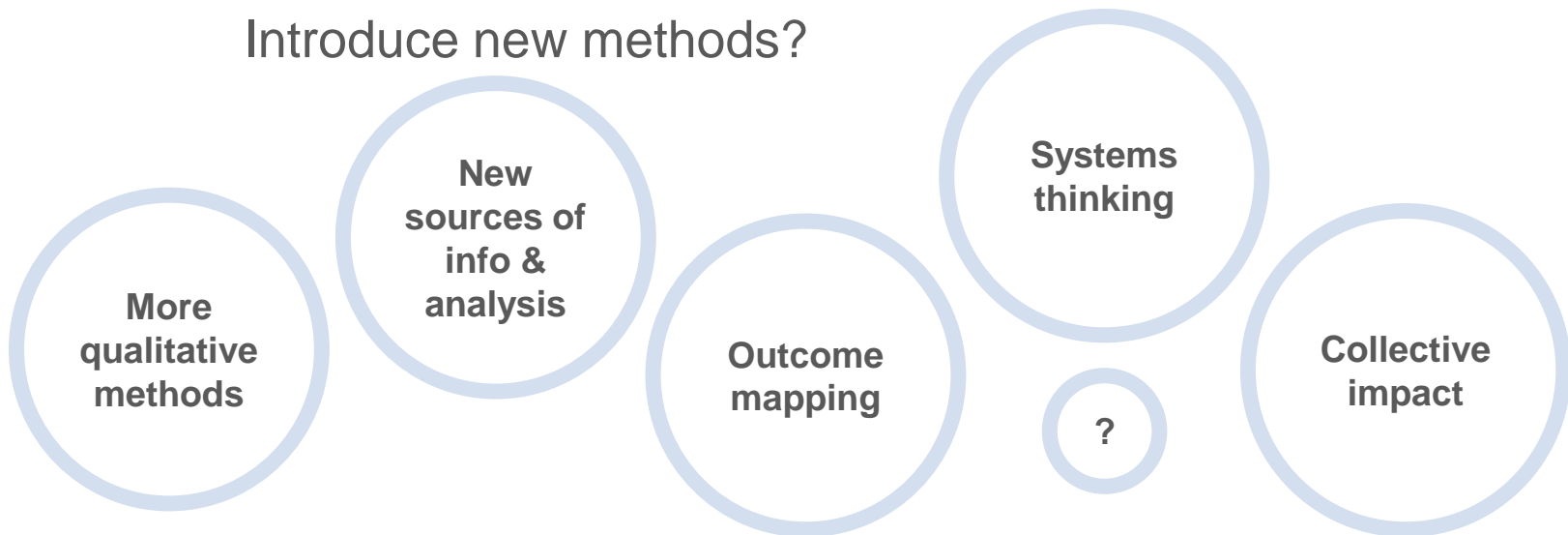
Applying key dimensions

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?



Thank you

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