

SESSION ONE - LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Innovative Coordination in the Spirit of the UN Reform

Key Lessons Learned and Promising Practices

The Spotlight Initiative Cross-Regional Learning Session on **Innovative Coordination in the Spirit of UN Reform** highlighted how Spotlight Initiative teams can leverage coordination mechanisms and implement interagency work to strengthen collaboration and accountability in the pursuit of eliminating violence against women and girls. This knowledge product highlights critical lessons learned and promising practices from Spotlight Initiative programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in other contexts that surfaced during the session. This product can be used to support quality programming and implementation efforts in service of the UN Reform and to eliminate violence against women and girls in the Spotlight Initiative and beyond.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Embracing **compromise and creativity in the spirit of collaboration** is essential to achieving interagency coordination under the Spotlight Initiative, even as the wider UN system is still transitioning to UN Reform.
- **Leveraging each UN agency's area of expertise through effective coordination and collaboration** allows for more comprehensive programming and ensures that the Initiative overall benefits from mobilizing the UN system as a whole.
- Coordinating across UN agencies on government partnerships by leveraging existing links to various ministries and other government entities is helpful to maintain regular communication about the Spotlight Initiative and **ensure a whole-of-government approach**.
- Communicating and advocating on the **added value of Spotlight Initiative as one UN, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator**, is critical for national ownership and ensuring high level commitment by national partners.
- Creating **shared spaces** to discuss and exchange on programme interventions enhances internal and interagency collaboration, leading to more efficient implementation.
- Ensuring that **resources are strategically used and activities are not duplicative** is an important element in achieving more efficient and effective programming under the principles of UN Reform.
- Utilizing **technology and virtual platforms**, such as Google Drive, for coordination makes **information-sharing and joint filing** easier and contributes to **improved communication across agencies**, especially in the context of COVID-19.

“LET’S THINK ABOUT THE BIGGER PICTURE, ITS RELEVANCE TO THE UN, AND HOW TO JOIN THE SUM OF OUR CONTRIBUTIONS. THINK OF WHAT EACH OF YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE UN SYSTEM MORE BROADLY. THE BEST WAY THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED IS BY BEING UNDER THE RESIDENT COORDINATOR’S SHIP. THIS IS TO BE A COMMON PLATFORM WHERE EVERY VOICE IS HEARD. LEARN TO LIVE WITH THE IMPERFECT. WHILE UN AGENCIES MIGHT HAVE DIFFERENT DATA AND GUIDELINES, AT TIMES, THERE NEEDS TO BE COMPROMISES. EMBRACE OPERATIONAL HARMONIZATION WHILE INCREASING EFFICIENCY. “

Alessandra Roccasalvo, Spotlight Initiative Secretariat



PROMISING PRACTICES

- **The Spotlight Initiative in Jamaica** has streamlined the engagement of partners through **interagency committees, a promising practice** in the country. For example, the Initiative established an interagency Communications Task Force and invited members of the EU Delegation to participate in monthly meetings and regular communication, which **fostered deeper collaboration** on communications and visibility. Pillar-level meetings were also created to ensure technical coherence across UN agencies, provide a space to learn from each other's lessons in implementation, and **achieve greater harmonization and coordination** across all pillars. Government and civil society partners were invited to join pillar sub-committees to support **meaningful multi-stakeholder participation**. These committees have **supported coordination efforts and fostered stronger partnerships overall**.
- **The Spotlight Initiative in Honduras** identified an opportunity to better **coordinate on communications and knowledge management by creating an interagency "toolbox."**¹ This toolbox will pool existing communication products, resources, and tools from all UN agencies which will be shared widely across Spotlight Initiative programmes and the Latin America region at large. In the spirit of leaving no one behind, the team is also exploring how to incorporate sign language so that people with hearing disabilities can have equal access to these materials. Though the toolbox is still under development, the Initiative identified this joint undertaking as innovative because it is a break from previous practice in communications work and has the potential to **amplify communications and visibility efforts for greater impact by reducing duplication of work, enabling UN agencies to leverage each other's expertise, and streamlining the dissemination of information**.
- **The Spotlight Initiative in Belize** spent a year consistently communicating and advocating the added value of the Initiative. This strengthened the partnership and coordination with the government. Pursuant, the government has been taking the lead and approached the Initiative to engage in a planning session, in order to align the Initiative with the government's priority and strategic frameworks to allow for **sustainability and long-term continuity of the programme**.
- **The Spotlight Initiative in Trinidad and Tobago** works to bring together Implementing Partners to discuss ongoing projects, provide updates and share information and opportunities on how to **interconnect with each other**. By supporting this systematic exchange across Implementing Partners, the Initiative is working towards a more cohesive and coordinated programme. The **development of a catalogue** by the Arthur Lok Jack School of Business in the University of the West Indies further facilitates knowledge sharing, as it serves as a database of GBV service providers across the three target communities of the Spotlight Initiative in the country, and therefore a resource for all partners and ultimately victims/survivors. An innovative practice by the Family Planning Association is making these resources more accessible by **incorporating the entire catalogue onto a bilingual mobile application, a virtual hub to include all GBV-related information in one space**, and which will therefore allow for the integration of materials from various service providers to further streamline information.

¹ The first version of the mapping of communications activities by the Initiative in Honduras - such as campaigns, publications, videos - organized by categories may be found [here](#). Kindly note that this document is still in development.

Access the Innovative Coordination presentation materials, recording, and resources [here](#) and the Programmatic and Operational Guidance folder in the Virtual Library [here](#).