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Case study report: Tunisia

**Final evaluation of UN Women’s regional MENA programme: ‘Men and Women for Gender Equality’**

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Acronyms

AIHR Arab Institute for Human Rights

BIAM Because I Am a Man

CAWTAR Center of Arab Women for Training and Research

CBO Community-Based Organisation

CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

CO Country Office

CREDIF Centre de Recherche, d’Etudes, de Documentation et d’Information sur la Femme

CSO Civil Society Organisation

EQ Evaluation Question

EVAW Ending Violence Against Women

FGD Focus Group Discussion

GEWE Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment

HRBA Human Rights-Based Approach

IMAGES International Men and Gender Equality Survey

INGO International Non-Governmental Organisation

IRB Institute Review Board

KII Key Informant Interview

LNOB Leave No One Behind

MENA Middle East and North Africa

MWGE Men and Women for Gender Equality

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

NIS National Institute of Statistics

OECD/DAC Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee

PANIG Plan d’Action National pour l’Intégration du Genre 2016–2020

ROAS Regional Office for the Arab States

SCG Strategic Consultative Group

Sida Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

ToC Theory of Change

UN United Nations

UNDAF United Nations Development Action Framework

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

UN Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

USD United States Dollar

VAW Violence against women

Background and Context

This country case study report is part of the final evaluation of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women’s (UN Women’s) regional programme ‘Men and Women for Gender Equality’ (MWGE), which was implemented in six Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries between the years 2015 and 2022, with funding by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The programme aimed to improve understanding of the root causes of gender inequalities in the Arab States, and to address these through a bottom-up approach to catalyse social norm change. It was implemented in two phases: Phase I from 2015 to 2019, with a budget of USD 10,386,500; and Phase II from 2019 to 2022, with a budget of USD 10,839,690. An independent end-term programme evaluation was commissioned by UN Women August 2021 to May 2022.

Besides Tunisia the evaluation covered Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine, as well as regional-level interventions. While the overall evaluation covers both phases of the programme implemented between 2015 and 2022, this country report on Tunisia covers only Phase II, as the country was not part of the first phase. As it joined only in Phase II, there has been no gender transformative programming by implementing partners in Tunisia as yet. Rather, the programme has focused on conducting the national International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) study. Beity, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which has long experience in women’s empowerment and gender equality, is responsible for the qualitative element of the study, while the Arab Institute for Human Rights (IADH – Institut Arabe des Droits de l’Homme) is responsible for the quantitative element: IADH has long outstanding experience in the field of human rights expertise, not only in Tunisia but also at the regional level.[[1]](#footnote-1)

|  |
| --- |
| **Phase II (2019–2022)** |
| Outcome 1: Communities have more gender equitable behaviours  Outcome 2: Key regional and national institutions (government, academia, faith-based institutions, media) and regional networks integrate/promote gender responsive practices  Outcome 3: Laws, policies and strategies promoting gender equality are drafted, revised and/or approved[[2]](#footnote-2)  Outcome 4: Effective management and coordination of programme |

Tunisia stands at the forefront of Arab countries in its historical efforts to advance women’s rights and gender equality. Since independence in 1956, Tunisia has actively promoted women’s equality through legislation and national plans. The Personal Status Code (*majalla*) was the first law, promulgated by the new State in 1956 to set the basis for the principle of equality through outlawing polygamy and providing men and women equal rights to file for a divorce,[[3]](#footnote-3) and through ending discrimination against women in inheritance according to section 103.[[4]](#footnote-4) Subsequent governments continued the process of promoting gender.

The uprising in 2011 and the subsequent political conflict between the secular and religious groups did not halt the process of advancing women’s rights, supported by feminist movement. In 2015, Tunisia enacted Law No. 46 to amend and supplement Law No. 40 from the year 1975, providing women with the right to travel with their minors without prior consent.[[5]](#footnote-5) In 2016, the government passed Law No. 61 on the prevention of and fighting against human trafficking. In 2017, Law No. 58 on the elimination of violence against women was issued, followed by the Council of Ministers’ approval to establish the National Observatory on Violence Against Women. In 2018, the Council of Ministers approved the draft law on equal inheritance.[[6]](#footnote-6)

At the time of this evaluation, Tunisia is continuing to face political instability as a result of the events of 25 July 2021, when President Kais Saied dismissed the Prime Minister and suspended activities of the Assembly of the representation of the people. The events were fuelled by anger at the economic and health situation that was exacerbated by COVID-19 consequences and put at risk the changing priorities of the country.[[7]](#footnote-7)

At national level, Tunisia has established a set of mechanisms, plans and strategies to ensure commitment to gender equality, reflecting its commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which it signed in 1980 and ratified in 1985.[[8]](#footnote-8) In 2016, Government Decree No. 626 established a national peer council for equality and equal opportunities between men and women to mainstream gender into public institutions.

Key relevant national plans and strategies[[9]](#footnote-9) include:

* The National Strategy for the Economic and Social Empowerment of Women and Girls in Rural Areas 2017–2020
* The National Multisectoral Strategy on Early Childhood Development (2017–2025)
* The National Strategy for the Promotion of the Family Sector (2018–2022)
* The National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2018–2023)
* National Action Plan for the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2018-2022)

Despite the advanced legal and policy framework to protect women from all forms of discrimination and the promote gender equality, Tunisia stands at 126th out of 156 countries, according to the Global Gender Gap Index of 2021.[[10]](#footnote-10) Tunisia is still suffering from a high prevalence of violence against women (VAW). A national survey carried out by Centre de Recherche, d’Etudes, de Documentation et d’Information sur la Femme (CREDIF) in 2015 showed that 78% of women are experiencing psychological violence in public spaces, while 41.2% of women are exposed to physical violence and 75.4% suffer from sexual violence.[[11]](#footnote-11) The study identified recommendations that were advocated by youth and adult respondents, including the need: to involve men, adults and youth in programmes to prevent and combat VAW (male involvement); to review the role of the family in conflict resolution; to give importance to education and training; to work to attract cultural actions for young people; to act on the educational system, its content, objectives, and pedagogical methods in order to sensitise children and youth to the values of gender equality; and to involve parents, teachers, the media and associations.[[12]](#footnote-12) Many of these recommendations echo the approach taken by MWGE across the region.

A study by Oxfam Tunisia on violence against women and girls was conducted in 2017. Three social norms were identified as drivers of VAW: that women should not strive for equal decision-making status in their relationship; that women should prioritise home and family over public or professional life; and that women should behave in public in a way that respects male domination.[[13]](#footnote-13)

In terms of women’s education and economic participation in the labour force, Tunisia ranks 106th in terms of education[[14]](#footnote-14) but 144th in terms of economic participation.[[15]](#footnote-15) The World Bank estimates that women constitute 28.3% of the total labour force.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Scope and Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the performance of the regional MENA programme MWGE in advancing gender equality in the target countries. The findings will be used to inform future programmatic decisions, organisational learning and accountability, as well as to strengthen UN Women’s strategies to transform negative behaviours and challenge discriminatory social norms, including through the engagement of men and boys. The evaluation for the Tunisia programme covers only Phase II, as the country was not part of the first phase.

Research Methodology

This evaluation assessed the MWGE programme using four of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria[[17]](#footnote-17) (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability), in addition to the criteria of gender and human rights. The evaluation used secondary data through review of available documents, in addition to primary data collected through nine key informant interviews (KIIs), using a set of nine evaluation questions (EQs) corresponding to the aforementioned criteria. The interviews in Tunisia were conducted between December 2021 and March 2022 and initial findings were shared with the UN Women country office (CO) in a validation workshop in February 2022.

Limitations

This evaluation took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting the access to the stakeholders as well as face-to-face discussions. In addition, as a result of the limited scope of interventions of the MWGE programme in Tunisia, where only the IMAGES Study and the Because I am a Man (BIAM) campaign were implemented, the sample of the interviews was less in number, focusing on the relevant partners involved in the Strategic Consultative Group (SCG) and implementing partners.

Strength of Data

Findings are colour-coded to indicate strength of evidence; this is not a judgement of whether a particular objective was met, nor is it a performance indicator.

* **Evidence** reflects data gathered from multiple sources such as desk review, focus group discussion (FGD) and KII with key stakeholders engaged in the programme (good triangulation).
* **Evidence** comes from multiple data sources (good triangulation) of lesser quality, or the finding is supported by fewer data sources (limited triangulation, e.g. documents from or KIIs with only one stakeholder category) of decent quality.
* **Evidence** comprises few data sources across limited stakeholder groups (limited triangulation) and is perception-based, or is generally based on data sources that are viewed as being of lesser quality.

I: Relevance

The MWGE programme is relevant to the 2014 Tunisian Constitution and national plan, though engagement of men is not explicit in Plan d’Action National pour l’Intégration du Genre 2016–2020 (PANIG). In addition, the programme is in alignment with UN Women’s Strategic Plan (2018–2021), the Strategic Note of UN Women Tunisia (2018–2021) and Tunisia UNDAF [United Nations Development Action Framework] 2015–2019. Although the process of consultation through SCG is enabling in nature and its members are relevant, the number of members of SCG reduces its efficiency and effectiveness.

EQ 1. To what extent are UN Women’s MWGE interventions aligned with regional and country contexts and addressing the priorities of stakeholders?

The MWGE programme is well-aligned with the broader gender equality and women’s empowerment policies of the national government, even if these currently do not directly include engaging with men and boys. It is in line with UN Women’s national, regional and global priorities, and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2015-2019 for Tunisia. While there was initial resistance among some women’s rights and feminist organisations to engaging with men and boys, this was overcome through consultations. The programme set up an inclusive advisory committee, though this proved to be too large, and an additional technical committee was formed.

**Finding 1.1: MWGE objectives and the related IMAGES study are congruent with the Constitution and National Plans and are in alignment with UN Women’s Strategic Plan (2018–2021) on gender equality. While the principle of equality is explicit in the Constitution, the approach to engage men and boys is not explicit in the PANIG. The approaches, objectives and methodologies of MWGE also reflect the UN Women Strategic Plan (2018–2021), the Strategic Note of UN Women Tunisia (2018–2021) and Tunisia UNDAF 2015–2019.**

Gender equality between men and women as the core approach and objective of MWGE is in alignment with the Tunisian Constitution and the broader legal framework on gender equality and women’s rights discussed above.[[18]](#footnote-18) The programme is also congruent with the framework of Tunisia’s previous national gender strategy (PANIG), which focuses on addressing women’s rights at political, economic and social levels, along with putting VAW as a core area of concern for the State’s action. However, the plan does not explicitly refer to engagement of men and boys as a strategy or approach to address gender inequality.[[19]](#footnote-19)

**Finding 1.2:**

The approach of engagement of men and boys for gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) is in alignment with the UN Women Strategic Plan (2018–2021). The plan references the engagement of men and boys as agents of change, and refers to engaging with men and tackling social norms as two key areas for addressing VAW.[[20]](#footnote-20)

MWGE’s objectives and approaches fall under Objective 3 of the Strategic Note of UN Women Tunisia to eliminate VAW. Objective 3 highlights interventions to address all forms of VAW, including advocating for non-stereotypical roles of men and women as well as producing evidence-based research and knowledge material, assessing men and women’s perspectives and attitude towards gender inequality issues.[[21]](#footnote-21) In addition, the programme contributes significantly to other objectives of the Strategic Note: women’s participation in decision-making, and targeting of women in poor and excluded areas. The Strategic Note also sets partnership as one of the preconditions to address the strategic directions.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Approaches and strategies enshrined in the MWGE programme that focus on gender equality, a rights-based approach and capacity building respond to the five principles of UNDAF 2015-2019. These approaches, together with IMAGES objectives and anticipated results, will feed into UNDAF’s strategic results related to the economic and social inclusive outcomes.[[23]](#footnote-23)

**Finding 1.3: The IMAGES consultation process included relevant stakeholders and key players in Tunisia with a pro-active approach to encourage engagement, although the number of members of the SCG is too large to make them efficiently and effectively involved. UN Women worked closely with other partners to advocate with women’s rights organisations for engaging with men and boys, in addition to women and girls, on gender equality to overcome initial scepticism to this approach.**

The programme formed an SCG with a wide range of 33 key players, including national State entities such as the Ministry of Family, Women and Social Solidarity and the National Observatory on Violence Against Women.[[24]](#footnote-24) The SCG also includes development partners, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and United Nations (UN) agencies, such as the European Union, embassies, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Tunisia, UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS), UN Women Tunisia, Promundo, Oxfam, and experts from civil society organisations (CSOs), including the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR).[[25]](#footnote-25)

The programme has held two meetings with the SCG to date, with regular updates through emails.[[26]](#footnote-26) Through these meetings MWGE was able to share the objectives, methodology and challenges of the IMAGES survey with stakeholders and receive their inputs on adaptation of the tools to the context of Tunisia.[[27]](#footnote-27) In addition, the programme formed a technical committee, which included the two national research partner organisations, UN Women ROAS and UN Women Tunisia, together with Promundo.[[28]](#footnote-28) The MWGE programme was keen to invite SCG members to those technical meetings to involve them in more consultations.[[29]](#footnote-29) Four members of the SCG responded and attended the one meeting that was organised in April 2021 to mark the end of the data collection process.[[30]](#footnote-30) The technical consultation included seeking the technical opinion of the Institute Review Board (IRB)[[31]](#footnote-31) for approval, including on the research ethics. UN Women ROAS helped organise regular exchanges of experiences through joint meetings between UN Women Tunisia with those of Jordan and other key players who were involved in the IMAGES survey across the four countries of Phase I of MWGE.[[32]](#footnote-32) With regard to IMAGES, they shared their experiences of seeking IRB approval and the best process to follow and how to plan for the study with the Tunisian colleagues.[[33]](#footnote-33)

Engaging with men and boys was not unanimously seen as the best strategy for promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment by all Tunisian women’s rights and feminist organisations, and UN Women worked together with other national and international actors, including civil society and academia to advocate for this approach through extensive consultations.[[34]](#footnote-34)

EQ 2. To what extent did UN Women’s MWGE programme adapt to respond to changing contexts?

The programme used an extensive process for the adaptation, starting with reviews and sharing opinions among the SCG, as well as holding periodic technical meetings and receiving IRB technical feedback. The adaptation included COVID-19-related matters, addressing sensitive issues (such as diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, violence or taboo topics like incest), translation into Arabic and adapting to the dialects of regions. The political instability did not affect the implementation, but it did impact the acceptance rate for participating in the household survey during its pre-test. Despite the delays caused by COVID-19, the programme was able to complete the data collection for the IMAGES survey. However, delivery of the findings is being delayed. COVID-19 and its gendered impacts also highlighted the saliency of MWGE.

**Finding 2.1: The programme has adapted IMAGES survey tools well to the context of Tunisia. However, the political instability affected the number of people who agreed to participate in the pre-test of the household survey.**

The process of adaptation has comprised of several overlapping and interrelated stages, including technical meetings among the research partners, consultations with UN Women ROAS and the CO, inputs from the SCG, a technical and ethical review by the IRB, and a pre-test stage.

The main areas of adaptation revolved around three issues.[[35]](#footnote-35) First, questions were added across each section assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the family, division of labour/gender roles, and the forms and prevalence of violence during the COVID 19 related quarantine. Second, questions addressing sensitive issues – such as sexuality, LGBT, minority groups and incest, as well as less sensitive questions on disabilities – were included in the survey, with no backlash from any conservative groups. Third, the adaptation included translation into Arabic, with further consideration with regard to the different dialects of Tunisia.

‘We spent days in peer review. We worried about the type of questions to the different people with different backgrounds. Gender dynamics is another area that we worried about. Can women interview men, especially on sensitive questions? But through the pre-test we were surprised of the good positive results as all sections were answered. The pre-test was so crucial to test the reaction, perceptions and dynamics’.[[36]](#footnote-36)

‘There were controversial issues that were hard to bring up such as prostitution, masturbation and pornography. However, the adaptation of the questions and training of researchers facilitated the data collection in a successful way’.[[37]](#footnote-37)

‘Selecting data collectors who have competence and experience to ask sensitive questions allowed them to run the interviews in a smooth way’.[[38]](#footnote-38)

‘The field data collection during the pre-test that took place during September 2021 amidst the political instability was one of the reasons for the rejecting rate for respondent to participate in the survey’.[[39]](#footnote-39)

**Finding 2.2: Despite delays caused by COVID-19, the programme was able to complete the data collection, but delays affected the timeline of launching the findings, which will be released in Q2 or Q3 of 2022. However, COVID-19-related consequences generated a positive impact in terms of underscoring the relevance of the themes covered by IMAGES.**

COVID-19 has impacted the timeline and methods of conducting the IMAGES research, slowing the pace of implementation. Fieldwork was suspended as there were restrictions on mobility across the country.[[40]](#footnote-40)

The mobilisation of the SCG was also delayed, first as a result of delays in selecting the partners and then by COVID-19. However, this did not affect the adaptation process. The programme shifted to using online platforms during the preparatory work of the technical partners, including the desk review and meetings to develop the questionnaires.

While the outbreak of COVID-19 has impacted families, gender roles and domestic violence, the study’s thematic areas become more relevant and facilitated the interviews on such topics, which were included in the survey. In addition, the extensive use of social media has increased the importance and reach of the videos produced under MWGE’s BIAM campaign.[[41]](#footnote-41)

In addition to the section on the impact of COVID-19 on the IMAGES study, MWGE in Tunisia contributed to ‘Rapid Assessment: The Effects of COVID-19 on Violence Against Women and Gendered Social Norms - A Snapshot from Nine Countries in the Arab States’ carried out by UN Women.[[42]](#footnote-42)

EQ 3. What is the comparative advantage of UN Women in leading the MWGE programme?

UN Women is in a strong position because of their leading role on GEWE, and they are best placed to introduce the approach of engagement of men. In addition, UN Women Tunisia has a strategic partnership with the national GEWE machinery in Tunisia. The regional nature of the programme and the active role of ROAS in facilitating exchange of knowledge and lessons learned provided the Tunisia component with a high level of technical support.

**Finding 3.1: UN Women has a leading strategic role in advancing gender equality in Tunisia. With MWGE, UN Women will be building a niche in the area of social norms and male engagement.**

Respondents confirmed UN Women’s comparative advantage in leading the MWGE programme, and highlighted its role in introducing the approach of engaging men and boys as well as advancing the national IMAGES study.[[43]](#footnote-43) UN Women is well positioned within Tunisia through its strategic partnership with governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and Seniors.[[44]](#footnote-44) In addition, UN Women has a wide range of networks – in e.g. academia, CSOs (including feminist movements) and the international community – which allowed it to convene a broad SCG to support it in implementing MWGE, and which can provide avenues for advocacy and institutional uptake when the programme gets to that point.[[45]](#footnote-45) However, based on experiences in other MWGE countries, this will require a well-articulated outreach, uptake and advocacy plan.

The regional nature of the programme allowed Tunisia to learn from the other countries where IMAGES had already been conducted, and respondents appreciated the active role of UN Women ROAS in bringing regional and international expertise to the programme in Tunisia.[[46]](#footnote-46)

EQ 4. How relevant were the programme intervention logic and Theory of Change (ToC)?

The programme is still in too early a stage to assess its relevance to the ToC. However, the conducting of IMAGES and the launch of BIAM contain elements that pave the way to build linkages among the three levels of change (micro, meso and macro). Being at an early stage while other countries have completed Phase II allows for learning, consolidating the relevance and effectiveness of the logic of interventions.

**Finding 4.1: The programme is at an early stage of carrying out the IMAGES study and releasing BIAM videos, but the process of the IMAGES study paves the way for a more valid chain of change.**

As the programme in Tunisia is still at an early stage, the intervention logic and ToC can only be validated to a limited degree. The fact UN Women was able to mobilise a wide range of relevant stakeholders around the approaches and thematic focus of MWGE, it paves the way to work on meso, micro and macro-level change in the future.

Thus, working with academic institutions such as the University of Tunis at meso level gives an added value that the programme can build upon in designing activities after the launch of IMAGES, especially when it comes to youth mobilisation, awareness raising and advocacy initiatives.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The initiation of BIAM ahead of IMAGES is facilitating the introduction of the approach of engaging men and boys, especially during COVID-19, setting the scene for the MWGE programme. The gendered impacts of the pandemic and of lockdown measures have reinforced the importance and relevance of the themes of the programme.

II Efficiency

The instrumental role played by ROAS added to the efficiency of using resources and learning to the UN Women Tunisia and implementing partners. However, roles and responsibilities for managing implementing partners need to be defined more clearly between CO and ROAS.

While the use of national, rather than international partners to conduct the IMAGES study should be more cost-efficient, the evaluation team is not able to pass judgement on this yet as the study has not been finalised.

EQ 6. Has MWGE been efficient, achieving high-impact work in a cost-effective way, while using processes and systems to enable sufficient resources to be made available in a timely manner to achieve planned results?

**Finding 6.1: Regional coordination is instrumental in coordination and facilitating learning among key players, but clearer roles and line of accountability are needed in terms of the implementing partners.**

Tunisia has joined the programme at the start of Phase II, when the four original countries had moved to the next stage of implementing interventions and influencing institutions. This has put the programme in Tunisia in an advantageous position to learn from other countries’ experience. Throughout the process of design, tailoring the tools and consultation, ROAS played an instrumental role in bringing all key actors of IMAGES to one table to exchange experiences.[[48]](#footnote-48) In addition, ROAS brought the two new countries into a learning meeting in order to gain insight into the process of implementation of the study.

‘ROAS has the institutional memory, design framework and learning. They provide advice on coordination and implementation. They can even protect CO when there are issues of sensitivity’.[[49]](#footnote-49)

In addition, ROAS was actively present and supporting technical meetings with the two research organisations and Promundo to make sure that discussions were facilitated and that adaptation was taking place adequately.[[50]](#footnote-50)

However, two concerns were voiced by different respondents. The first is related to the unclear role of Promundo at the very beginning. While all respondents recognised that the survey is a Promundo product, it was not entirely clear to respondents how Promundo would build the capacity of IADH to implement the research.[[51]](#footnote-51)

‘It wasn’t clear how the relation should be between Promundo and the implementing partners. We spent days in different meetings to develop curriculum but there were tensions on how to contextualise the survey to Tunisia, lots of negotiations with Promundo on having a weighted questionnaire. The capacity building was not actually a training but it was a round of discussions on Tunisia and around the study’.[[52]](#footnote-52)

The second concern related to the management of the implementing partners, and responsibility for deliverables, which need to be clearer.[[53]](#footnote-53)

‘One implementing partner was about to send the analysis, but they were delayed pending the review and discussions with ROAS. Now the CO is held accountable for the delay’.[[54]](#footnote-54)

**Finding 6.2: While the budget was adequate, human resources and the time factor were challenges for the programme and the survey.**

The Tunisian share of the total budget was 6%, as was the case of Jordan, as the two new countries are joining the programme for the first time and are focusing on conducting the IMAGES survey only.[[55]](#footnote-55) From the CO perspective, having a programme associate is seen as crucial for quality and timely implementation of the programme.[[56]](#footnote-56)

As a result of monitoring performance during the pre-test part of the survey, it was discovered that a few data collectors had not sufficiently understood the research topics. A decision was therefore made to replace them and to train new researchers.[[57]](#footnote-57)

The most pressing challenge was time. Despite the fact that the programme started in January 2019,[[58]](#footnote-58) contracts with the two research associations were signed only in the second quarter of 2020.[[59]](#footnote-59) It took the programme considerable time to identify the technical partners, as there was resistance from CSOs and feminist groups at the very beginning with regard to the male engagement approach. The programme mitigated this issue by expanding the scope of identifying implementing partners to those working on human rights (in the case of IADH) and engagement of academia (in the case of the University of Tunis) and other CSOs, such as CAWTAR (who work on women’s empowerment), Oxfam (with their previous experience in engagement of men and social norms) and Kvinna till Kvinna. Those organisations held a dialogue with CSOs in their networks with regard to the approach and focus areas of MWGE.[[60]](#footnote-60)

The original plan was to hold seven days of training on the human rights approach; but, because time was limited owing to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, shorter sessions were substituted.[[61]](#footnote-61)

‘We had the idea of providing two more training[s] in order to ensure efficient mentoring and understanding of the topic of human rights-based approach. However, the timeline was very tight and researchers are extremely busy with their professional work. So the team at the implementing partner relied on mentoring’.[[62]](#footnote-62)

Savings generated from the change to online methods during the COVID-19 pandemic were used to provide masks and hand sanitiser for the safety of researchers in the field.

The gains in cost-effectiveness from using national rather than international implementers for the IMAGES study could not be gauged yet, as the process is yet to be finalised.

III: Effectiveness and Impact

As the programme in Tunisia is still in developing the IMAGES study, which is the basis for MWGE interventions, the interventions are related to outcomes 1 and 3 only, focusing on awareness raising and knowledge products. At IMAGES level, the programme was able to complete the desk review, adaptation, pre-test, data collection and analysis, but the write-up of the study was still being conducted at the time of this evaluation.

EQ 5. To what extent has the MWGE programme contributed to behaviour and policy change, institutional and national capacity development, information and knowledge sharing, to promote GEWE across different settings?

**Finding 5.1: Launching BIAM ahead of IMAGES’s findings was an added value to the programme in Tunisia, but it needs to be more visible and reach more target groups.**

One of the advantages of starting later than other countries is the opportunity to learn and benefit from tested methods and messages around men’s roles and equality – for example BIAM, which started ahead of the release of the findings from the IMAGES survey.[[63]](#footnote-63)

ROAS cooperated with the CO to launch 13 videos, featuring various Tunisian influencers and political figures, and 8 Graphics Interchange Formats (GIFs), created around the topics of positive masculinities, ending violence against women (EVAW), gender equality in school and public life, and COVID-19.[[64]](#footnote-64) Learning from previous campaigns in the other four countries, UN Women mitigated the risk of a potential backlash by ensuring that they delivered simplified messages to help relate to the public in a sensitive way. The video of Helmi Dridi, a popular Tunisian male actor,[[65]](#footnote-65) was a good example of storytelling methods used by the actor to relate to everyone in the community using simple language.

This process was preceded by using the 16 days of activism to sensitise the young men and women in Tunisia on related messages to BIAM – on positive masculinity, women’s rights, the fight against sexist discourse and the role of the media as actors in amplifying gender equality – through three awareness raising webinars.[[66]](#footnote-66)

BIAM was launched through ROAS social media platforms and, very recently, on the Facebook page of UN Women Tunisia, which was created in July 2021 but with little outreach.[[67]](#footnote-67) Reactions and feedback are still to be secured as regards the progress of the Programme; this is something that needs to be planned for to make it more visible. However, 102,673 men and women were reached by the BIAM campaign during the first nine months of 2021.[[68]](#footnote-68)

**Finding 5.2: Despite the delay in releasing the findings of IMAGES, the process of the IMAGES study is effective in general.**

**The process of the IMAGES study was a multi-layered one, starting with the identification of partners**. The strategic direction of UN Women was to identify local partners in order to enhance ownership of the study. The two research organisations selected for this mission complement each other in terms of focus expertise as well as methodologically. To ensure the quality of data, the programme contracted the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) under the partnership with IADH; NIS had the role of verifying and ensuring that the selected sample is nationally representative.[[69]](#footnote-69) The study went through an adaptation phase during which Promundo, UN Women ROAS and UN Women Tunisia, the SCG and IRB contributed their overall technical opinions and feedback on contextualisation and the questionnaires.

The process was complemented with a capacity building programme on the use of tools and on subject matters related to human rights.[[70]](#footnote-70) These were carried out through several rounds of training. The pre-test training, focusing on the quantitative tool, took place offline on 3–5 September 2021, during which participants learned how to ask the questions in the tool and how to use the tablets.[[71]](#footnote-71) The pre-test was a crucial stage to help researchers improve the questioning and probing.[[72]](#footnote-72) It was done in the field after the training in order to test the questionnaires and consolidate the field researchers’ experience in using them.[[73]](#footnote-73) The field pre-test lasted for five days and was conducted by seven researchers, with one supervisor, covering nine governorates across Tunisia.[[74]](#footnote-74) The researchers were able to cover 98 respondents from 447 families, with the response rate reaching 77.2%. Some people declined to participate in this exercise; reasons included a refusal to host strangers, COVID health conditions in the country, the security situation and the amount of time the survey took (this was also commented on in the IRB report).[[75]](#footnote-75) The report produced learning and recommendations, including that data collectors needed training on the human rights-based approach which was adopted by the main training course.

For the main data collection phase, IADH did a five-day training session for the data collectors, using mixed modalities (online and offline), starting with an introduction to human rights.[[76]](#footnote-76) The capacity building was supported with mentoring and daily meetings to review the data for quality assurance, including listening to interview recordings to verify responses.[[77]](#footnote-77)

IV: Gender and Human Rights

There is good practice in combining the understanding and consideration of gender equality, human rights approach and Leave No One Behind (LNOB) in terms of the capacity building and integration of LGBTQ individuals and people living with disability, but there is still room to integrate the latter in tailored interventions when designing future interventions under MWGE in Tunisia.

EQ 7. To what extent was a human rights-based and gender transformative approach incorporated in the design and implementation of the programme?

**Finding 7.1: IMAGES’ tools and processes combined gender equality approaches and a human rights-based approach (HRBA) throughout the selection of partners, adaptation and data collection.**

The selection of two research organisations with renowned expertise in the field of human rights and women’s empowerment has contributed to the impact of having national partners with knowledge of the local context. In addition, the concepts of gender equality and an HRBA are enshrined in the six sections of the ‘tools’ sections of IMAGES, incorporating gender analysis ingredients such as assessing gender roles, stereotyping, and participation in decision-making within the family. The inclusion of questions on sexuality and incest, along with questions on the implications of COVID-19 on men and women within the family, have contributed to inclusiveness for different groups.

**Finding 7.2: The principle of Leave No One Behind was well-integrated into the adapted IMAGES research, including research on LGTB individuals and people living with disability. However, there is room to further reinforce it in capacity building material and knowledge products in future phases of MWGE in Tunisia.**

To ensure national representation, the research tools targeted a sample from men and women from all regions of Tunisia, and LGBT individuals and people living with disability were included in the quantitative sample.[[78]](#footnote-78) As the questionnaire was a household survey, interviewees were contacted in their own domestic spaces. The data collectors made sure that they delivered the questions in simple and direct language in order to get answers.[[79]](#footnote-79)

Female and male data collectors/researchers were selected from all over the country, in order to ensure representation based on criteria that focused on competence and experience in the field of the subject matter of IMAGES, so that they were able to ask sensitive questions relating to the geographical areas surveyed by the IMAGES study is surveying,[[80]](#footnote-80) and so that they had the capacity to understand the perceptions and norms of the different regions and groups.

While the programme in Tunisia has not started designing follow-up interventions yet, it should ensure that the particular concerns of people with disability will be incorporated in the design of knowledge products as well as community interventions in the up-coming stages.

V: Sustainability

While the programme in Tunisia is at too early a stage to make wide-ranging statements about sustainability, the building of national ownership and capacity by selecting national partners for IMAGES increases sustainability, but also provides added credibility to the findings when it comes to advocacy and uptake at the national level. BIAM’s videos are an asset that may be used widely. The network formed through the SCG is a good basis to build upon for future partnerships in the next phase.

EQ 8. What are the indications that MWGE’s interventions and approaches will be sustained?

**Finding 8.1: Building national capacities to conduct IMAGES paves the way for potential uptake at national level to consolidate future research that has gender equality and HRBAs as two principles guiding future programming. The IMAGES study and BIAM are two knowledge products that provide new resources for addressing gender equality in Tunisia; they can inform and be utilised in future phases of the programme, as well as be utilised by other institutions.**

The process of selecting national partners and training them on the use of the IMAGES tools, and the subsequent interventions related to quality assurance, mentoring and adaptation, provide a comprehensive capacity building package for national research organisations and researchers.[[81]](#footnote-81) As a result of the training, the data collectors – who mainly had a sociology background – now also have more understanding of the issues of gender equality and the HRBA.[[82]](#footnote-82)

Surveying social norms and the implications on gender equality, as well as the use of the male engagement approach in the research, will constitute a national reference for the programme as well as institutions.[[83]](#footnote-83) In addition, the production and uploading of 13 videos and 8 GIFs on social media will contribute to raising awareness on men’s role within the family.[[84]](#footnote-84)

**Finding 8.2: The SCG network formed through the current phase of the programme can form a strong base for future advocacy and institutional uptake. In addition, capacities of the researchers and partner organisations that have been consolidated in the area of human rights, gender equality and men’s engagement are available for future updates of IMAGES or other national research.**

The SCG includes a wide range of national and international actors who are working on gender equality in Tunisia, forming a strong network that will continue to work on the subject matter with future engagement in the programme in Phase II. The SCG could be a basis for future partnerships on programme interventions, buy-in to regional material produced by MWGE, and advocacy campaigns.[[85]](#footnote-85)

VI: Evidence, Learning and Knowledge Management

The process and mechanism for learning facilitated by ROAS is efficient and effective in allowing UN Women Tunisia and implementing partners to benefit from national, regional and international experiences. In addition, the findings of IMAGES have the potential to be widely used, provided the programme develops a dissemination plan and starts the design of programme interventions for Phase II.

EQ 9. How is the programme generating, utilising and sharing lessons and knowledge?

**Finding 9.1: The programme was able to generate technical and procedural learning throughout the design of the IMAGES survey and tools.**

Respondents identified three different learning events that enriched their capacities in understanding the context of the IMAGES study. First, the technical meeting with Promundo provided an international exposure to how IMAGES is being used to assess social norms and all the underlying thematic areas. Second, the exchange meeting with Jordan was useful, as the latter also joined the programme in Phase II and as Jordan was ahead of Tunisia in the planning and implementation of the study. Respondents confirmed that it was very useful to learn more on the planning for the study and analysis. The third learning opportunity was with the implementing partner of IMAGES in the four countries. All respondents recognised the added value of ROAS in successfully facilitating the process of exchanging the experience between implementing partners of the programme and catalysing learning.[[86]](#footnote-86) The whole process of learning provided national, regional and international dimensions to allow implementers in Tunisia to internalise the learning and transfer it into action.[[87]](#footnote-87)

**Finding 9.2: IMAGES findings and BIAM are most likely to be widely used by national partners, including academia and institutions, and will inform the design of the programme in Phase II, provided the programme develops a dissemination plan and designs tailored interventions for Phase II.**

The findings of IMAGES as a national study are most likely to be used by governmental entities, the foremost being the Ministry of Women, Family, Children and Seniors, as a strategic partner for UN Women to inform the different policies and programmes. Through the engagement of academia and international organisations, the findings have the potential to be the main reference for their projects and programmes. In addition, BIAM videos are accessible for public awareness. However, there is a need to have a dissemination and advocacy plan and to start the design for interventions for the next phase, informed by IMAGES.

Lessons Learned

1. The strategic decision of the programme to use local and national research organisations allows for ownership and buy-in of the findings at national level. Selecting organisations with long experience in the field of human rights and gender equality facilitated the understanding of the scope of the research and improved the quality of findings. In addition, the selection of well-renowned national organisations (IADH, Beity and NIS) increased national credibility of both the process and anticipated results, which in turn ensured sustainability and national uptake of the findings.
2. Widening the scope of identification of partners to include organisations working in human rights, along with academia and other supportive organisations who had worked before on engagement of men, was a good practice to mitigate the resistance facing the programme at the very beginning.
3. The adaptation and the pre-test are two crucial stages in the implementation of a national study such as IMAGES. Elements such as adapting to the dialects of the different regions, selecting researchers from the same geographical areas of research and adding a rights-based approach to the training are essential considerations for future research.
4. The role of the regional office was instrumental in catalysing the learning across three types of players in the programme – Promundo as the technical advisor of IMAGES, Jordan as the country standing at the same stage of implementation as Tunisia, and the other four countries who carried out the study in the previous phase – who used it in many different ways to influence governmental entities and other institutions. The influential role of the regional office saved resources in terms of time, money and technical learning; this is a good practice to continue within the current programme and in the event of extension to other new countries.
5. Capacity building is strategic in carrying out IMAGES, as it establishes common understanding among researchers as well as improving the quality of data collected. In addition, capacity building should be seen as a process that is not limited to training but also involves mentoring, improving knowledge on thematic areas of the subject matter.
6. The network that has been built through the formation of the SCG is crucial and should continue as an advisory committee, not only because it paves the way for ownership of the study but also because it enhances programme visibility, which is most likely to consolidate the streaming of concepts, approaches and strategies at national level.
7. Addressing sensitive issues such as sexuality, incest and masturbation has two purposes. One is to assess root causes and forms of inequality related to a deep dive of power dynamics, violence and discrimination. A second is to enhance the quality of inclusion of men and women participating in the study who may experience any of these issues.
8. For the next stage after the finalisation of IMAGES, Tunisia can draw on experiences from other MWGE countries for maximising outreach, advocacy and uptake. Learning from Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco provides evidence of the importance of partnering with government entities to ensure ownership and sustainability. Linked to this is learning from Lebanon, which showed good practice when they influenced unexpected beneficiaries such as the Lebanese Army Forces. In addition, linking the three levels of change (micro, meso and macro) enhances the intervention logic. For instance, Lebanon provided a good example when they worked on anti-sexual harassment law across the three levels. Morocco provided another good example when they unified their advocacy campaign on paternity leave across all community-based organisations (CBOs) involved in the programme. These lessons learned can be adapted for the next phase of implementation in Tunisia as well.

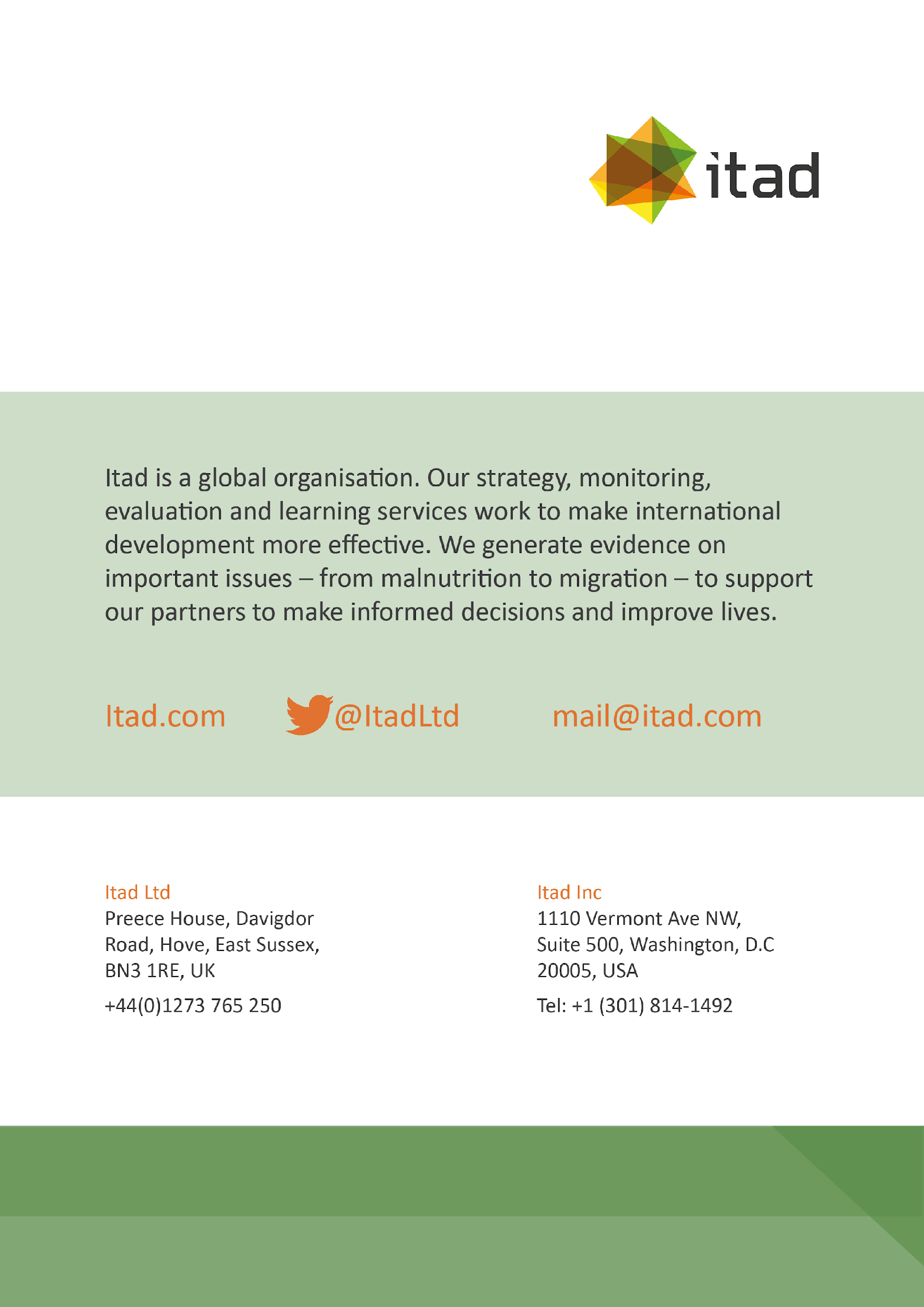
Conclusions

1. The MWGE programme is broadly in alignment with Tunisian legislation and national programmes on gender equality, the PANIG 2016–2020’s main pillars, and broader goals and areas of work of WROs, and in line with UN Women’s work in country. However, the approach of working with men and boys was a new angle and was not wholly uncontroversial. Adopting the approach required UN Women and its partners to have extensive consultations with WROs, and a successful completion of the first phase in Tunisia should help alleviate concerns.
2. The broad set-up of the SCG proved to be too unwieldy, and the smaller technical advisory committee was more workable. However, the SCG does provide a useful platform for the following stages upon which to build coalitions for future advocacy and outreach activities, as it brings together state entities, civil society as well as development partners. The experiences from other MWGE countries have highlighted the utility and need for such broad coalitions for institutional uptake and advocacy.
3. Despite delays caused by COVID-19, the programme was able to take advantage of the pandemic by integrating questions on COVID-19 within the IMAGES survey and by launching the campaign of BIAM ahead of the study with messages that also address COVID-19, making the response to COVID-19 more aligned to the programme. While launching BIAM is of added value to the programme, there is a need to make it more visible and create strategies to reach out to communities and CBOs at local level with concrete tailored interventions that relate to target groups’ lives and context.
4. Although the findings of IMAGES have not yet been released, the process of design and adaptation was effective through e.g.: identifying local partners who are experts in gender equality and human rights along with research qualifications; the formation of the SCG; technical meetings for adaptation, with validation from IRB to provide technical views and input into the methodology and questionnaires; capacity building on the tools and subject matter of the survey; selection of high-calibre researchers, especially in the area of sociology; the pre-test in the field; and quality assurance procedures.
5. The role of ROAS has been instrumental in bringing all actors involved into the study for discussion and exchanging learning related to the planning, implementation and adaptation. However, division of responsibilities and lines of accountability between ROAS and the CO in terms of managing implementing partners need to be clearer.
6. The programme has combined the approach of gender equality and HRBA into the activities of the programme well, and has considered LNOB while designing the sample of the study. The fact that the programme is still in in its first phase should allow the programme to consider designing specific interventions that enable people with disabilities to participate in future activities.

Recommendations

See next page.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendation** | | **Level** | **Linked conclusions** | **Directed** | **Ranking** | **How action can be supported** |
| 1 | Consolidate networks and partnership with government entities and CSOs to create a pathway for ownership of the findings and recommendations of the IMAGES study as well as a niche to influence policies such as integrating the approach of men and boys in the work of Ministry of Women, Family, Children and Seniors. | Strategic and Programmatic | 1,2, 4 | ROAS, CO Tunisia | **High** | Continue the dialogue around the programme with government entities through the release of the findings and relevant round tables. |
| 2 | Take advantage of researchers and partner organisations trained on tools and subject matter for future use in formative research that precedes interventions, such as Program P. | Operational and  Programmatic | 4 | CO Tunisia | **High** | Establish networks with academia as well as other research organisations to support future advocacy campaign and formative research. |
| 3 | Develop a strategy and plan for disseminating knowledge products of the IMAGES study and BIAM, with a clearly developed advocacy strategy. | Operational and Programmatic | 3 | CO Tunisia and ROAS | **Med** | The plan would include round tables, 16 days of activism, members of SCG and the academia. |
| 4 | Build upon the good rapport between the CO and ROAS in supporting the programme in order to establish clear roles and lines of accountability between ROAS and CO for a potential follow-up programme | Operational | 5 | ROAS and CO | **High** | Develop guidelines that are binding for ROAS and COs |
| 5 | Make sure that gender equality and rights-based approach, as well as the inclusion of people with disability and LGBT individuals, are incorporated in all knowledge products as well as in tailored community interventions, making use of learning from other countries, especially relating to identifying priority issues for each community, development of messages, the use of knowledge products, capacity building on engagement of men, peer to peer and positive deviance. | Programmatic | 6, 3, 4 | CO and ROAS | **Med** | Knowledge products, awareness raising material, capacity building, policy dialogue and community interventions. |



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