Evaluation Summary

Women's Voice and Leadership Program Formative Evaluation

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Global Affairs Canada's Evaluation Division conducted a formative evaluation of the Women's Voice and Leadership (WVL) Program, covering the period from June 2017 to March 2021. The evaluation had three objectives: to determine if and to what extent the department was "fit for purpose" to support WVL as a feminist program; to determine if WVL's design was relevant and appropriate to address the needs of women's rights organizations (WROs); and to determine WVL's progress toward results.

KEY FINDINGS

▪ WVL's ambitious program approach was successful in making WVL's feminist vision a reality and in ensuring the cohesiveness of a highly decentralized initiative. It was however challenging to implement for the divisions involved, particularly the Gender Equality Division (MGS).

▪ When WVL was launched, departmental processes and systems were not sufficiently "fit for purpose" for feminist programming and direct support to local WROs.

▪ WVL was highly relevant to local WROs' needs in diverse contexts, contributing to filling both funding and capacity gaps and allowing sufficient flexibility to participating WROs to focus on what mattered most to their communities.

▪ Despite a limited timeframe for project implementation and significant disruptions due to COVID-19, there was evidence of early positive results. The majority of WVL projects made progress toward strengthening the organizational capacity of supported WROs and their programming effectiveness, including in response to COVID-19. Whether these early results will lead to more financially sustainable WROs remains unclear.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure appropriate mandates, roles, responsibilities, capacities and resources for MGS in relation to WVL and appropriate departmental roles, responsibilities, structures, resources and capacities for a possible WVL 2.0.

2. Document, share and promote effective strategies and best practices to support and foster WROs sustainability in WVL and WVL 2.0.

3. Strengthen capacity of local organizations and organizations from developing countries as implementing partners of a possible WVL 2.0.

4. Explore more adapted corporate processes and tools for direct support to local organizations, including programming processes and risk management approach for grants and contributions.

5. Develop a consistent and streamlined approach to approving extensions for WVL projects.

6. Leverage the guidance, tools and learning products developed to date to strengthen a common understanding and shared ownership of WVL's feminist approach.