Results-based Reporting Tips
for Spotlight Initiative Annual (and Final) Reporting

Welcome!

Below you'll find 10 tips (and a bonus one!) to further strengthen the quality of your annual and final cumulative reports. These tips emerged over the past six Spotlight Initiative annual reporting cycles.

While the tips are framed primarily with annual reporting in mind, Spotlight Initiative programmes can also use them when preparing their final cumulative reports, simply adapt them to reflect cumulative achievements over the course of your programme.

We hope they'll be helpful!

For additional guidance and advice on reporting, please feel free to visit the Reporting FAQ!

Tip 1: Use Change Language (Results-Based Language)

Why? How we frame our achievements and contributions is important. Rather than listing your programme's activities or interventions, try to instead detail **the change** your programme has contributed to or is expected to contribute to over time.

For example:

- Did your programme strengthen capacity or expand awareness and understanding?
- Did your programme contribute to a more favourable legislative environment?
- Did access to quality services improve, particularly for marginalized women and girls?
- Were women's rights organisations strengthened with your programme's support, and therefore better able to advance their efforts (sustainably) to EVAWG?
- Did the GBV data ecosystem improve or expand? In what ways? Why is this significant?

Let's Practice!

Example 1

Original text (activity or intervention focused):
"Under the services pillar, Spotlight Initiative held a range of meetings to contribute to setting up a one-stop-center in two provinces in country X."

Recommended (change-focused):
"The Spotlight programme in X contributed to establishing a comprehensive one-stop-center in

Alpha and Beta provinces, which is expected to improve the availability of health and psychosocial services services Importantly, the center also offers improved access to individuals from structurally marginalized communities, including women with disabilities and women in rural areas, helping improve accessibility, as well.

Example 2

Original text (activity or intervention focused):
"In terms of strategic focus and efficiency, selected civil society organizations and women's movements were guided to develop innovative and integrated workplans."

Recommended (change-focused):
"The Initiative helped bring together – in a 4 part convening series – 4 CSOs to enhance community engagement and coordination on EVAWG. With Spotlight Initiative's support, CSOs developed innovative and integrated workplans to identify cross-cutting issues and collectively define they way forward in addressing them. This contributed to unprecedented collaboration among civil society actors, overcoming previous siloed ways of working to better address VAWG over time."

Tip 2: Narratively Disaggregate Your Results

Be sure to ask yourself: Is our programme driving results for all? Results may be achieved but for whom? Results (or changes your programme may have contributed to) will likely affect different groups in different ways, and it's important to draw this out in your report, so that we (as Spotlight Initiative) know which populations we are reaching and, importantly, who we may be missing (in the spirit of LNOB).

Let's Practice!

Example 1

Your report may note that your programme helped improve access to quality services, **but** perhaps women living in the capital or in urban areas benefited most, while rural women, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ youth, or refugees continue to face barriers.

Example 2

Your report notes that your programme strengthened the capacity of women's rights organisations to engage in the development of a National Action Plan – a critical result – but most support went to larger NGOs / and national organisations. Grassroots organisations, who are on the frontlines of change in their communities, may still need targeted support to engage meaningfully in legislative processes (helping ensure these processes are more responsive).

These distinctions are important to capture, and should be detailed in your report's results section (and inform programming so you can better ensure LNOB).

Tip 3: Explain Why the Result Matters (Contextualize)

Provide context-specific information to ground your results and highlight the significance of the result in your context. Ask yourself: why does this result matter?

Let's practice!

Let's say your programme helped pass a new law or revise an existing one, or perhaps your programme supported improved service delivery, or advocated for sustained national funding to end GBV, or work with new grassroots organisations, you might consider asking yourself: why does this matter in this country or city or context?

So for example, you might ask yourself:

- Why is it important that we helped pass this new law? Is this the **first law of its kind** addressing violence against LGBTQI groups or protecting WHRDs (a political significant achievement that folks have been advocating for a decade?)
- Why is it important that we worked on the budget? Is there now – after two decades of demands – a **dedicated budget line** to end GBV in the national budget?
- Did you support the **first participatory community process** to improve service accessibility (after years of demanding greater accountability to communities, and their input)?
- Did you **partner with grassroots groups** working at the intersection of GBV and climate, leading to better engagement with marginalized communities (who had previously been left behind in services)?

This type of information helps the reader understand what you achieved, and **why it's meaningful** in your context.

Tip 4: Capture Any Unintended or Unexpected Results (Positive or Negative)

It's important to report any unexpected or unintended impacts of your programme's interventions (positive or negative). If you don't have any to report - or don't know if your interventions led to any unintended results (because you don't have a system in place to capture these) please note this in your annual report, as well. And, if the latter, please note steps you're taking to capture these types of results in the future.

Let's practice!

Example 1

Perhaps your programme has been supporting the development of a new law on access to services for survivors. In doing so, you've brought together actors across feminist and women's rights movements and local and grassroots civil society organizations to dialogue and draft text for the new law through a consultative process. **The result?** The draft bill was put to parliament, inclusive of the voices of these movements and organizations, and the communities they represent. This is the expected result (and a critical achievement) of this work, and should be reflected in your report under Pillar A.

In addition though an unintended positive change may also have occurred: through this process, for example, connections across these movements and organisations were strengthened, and they collectively decided to form a "formal group" or mechanism to systematically collaborate going forward (including by regularly inputting into various government processes). **This is a**

contribution that could be captured under pillar D, for example, as an unexpected, positive result of the initial intervention.

Example 2

Another unintended outcome of this process could be that feminists or progressive lawmakers in government were further bolstered, and motivated to form an inter-ministerial standing committee to discuss women's human rights, gender equality and effort to end violence, with the regular input of local/grassroots organizations. This (and the example above) are types of unexpected results that should be captured in your report, as well.

Tip 5: Report both outcome by outcome results and cross-cutting results in your narrative annual report

Be sure to share your outcome by outcome results, as well as the results you've achieved across and beyond specific outcomes/pillars.

Let's practice!

When reflecting on contribution to change that cuts across or goes beyond outcome areas), please consider highlighting the following, if relevant:

- Did your programme work with the highest level of government–and did this help to elevate the strategic positioning of violence against women and girls on the political agenda/within the broader political landscape?
- Did your programme contribute to shifts in stakeholders' attitudes, beliefs and ways of working above and beyond a specific outcome area?
- Did your programme contribute to movement or cross-movement building, above and beyond any specific outcome area?
- Did the Initiative implement the principle of leaving no one behind, and was, as a result, better able to reach and engage communities and rights holders in a meaningful way?
- Did your programme implement the principles of UN Reform, and if so, did it contribute to strengthened delivery and improved results across outcome areas?

Tip 6: Remember to reflect on the principle of "leaving no one behind" throughout your report

- Please ensure that the principle of "leaving no one behind" principle iis meaningfully covered in your annual report. It is important to provide as many details as possible on **how the programme is working aligned with this principle ((**in the way we work) **and the results** of this (i.e. a detailed analysis of the impact of your activities on *all* women and girls, including specifically those facing specific forms of discrimination - related to the tip just above on disaggregation).
- Consider how your partnerships (and who you parter with) help advance the principle of LNOB

- Please make sure that any challenges or limitations that were faced vis a vis meaningful integration of this principle are well-reflected, as well, and mitigating measures / efforts to address these are included.

Tip 7: Remember to reflect on the principle of UN Reform in your report, as well

- Please ensure that your narrative report includes information on how your programme is aligning with the principles of UN Reform and the extent to which this has facilitated more successful programme delivery, better reaching programmatic outcomes for women and girls.
- Think about how Spotlight Initiative is promoting:
  - interagency collaboration and coordination
  - leveraging UN agency complementary expertise, under RC leadership
  - the use of common backends / operational processes to streamline procurement or partnership agreements

Tip 8: Reflect Learning and How It Is Being Taken Forward

- Your report should reflect a range of lessons learned (technical, programmatic, operational) and, importantly, **how these lessons will be taken forward.** Reporting on your lessons learned is important, as is explaining to the reader how you're planning to take these lessons forward as you continue to programme.
  - How will programming adapt?
  - Will (and in what ways) will interventions change?
  - Will new partnerships be formed, or existing ones reimagined?

Tip 9: Don't duplicate information across your narrative report

- Your narrative report serves as a wonderful communication tool by sharing the work and contributions of your Spotlight programme. Please ensure that the report is well-written and copy-edited (you may want to hire a copy-editor), and that it can be easily understood by a wide audience (including the general public).

- While we want to ensure the Initiative's reports are comprehensive, and well-detailed, we also want to try to keep the annual report to 50 pages (or less). To do this, please avoid duplicating information in your report: please direct / signpost the reader to the relevant sections of the report to avoid repetition.

Tip 10: General tips across Various sub-sections of your report - please try to apply!

Innovative, Promising + Good Practices (a section in the narrative template + Annex D)

- It is important that the practices put forth are accurately described as innovative, good or promising to contribute to future Spotlight Initiative programming and the evidence-base

on EVAWG overall. Please **take the time to assess whether the practice(s) you provide qualify as innovative, promising or good practices, following the guidance provided in** Annex D.

- When describing the practices, it is important to **clarify the context and connect it to the big picture** for a first-time reader. For example, if the practice is relevant to a specific policy or protocol mentioned, briefly clarify what the policy/protocol is, how exactly the practice connects to it, and the wider implications of that connection. The details of the practices should always be connected to its wider significance and impact in your context (including how it may evolve in the future).

Civil Society and Movement Building

- The **engagement with civil society–and particularly the attempt to partner with local and grassroots organizations–should be thoughtfully mainstreamed throughout** your final report, **as should efforts to support movement building (as a critical ingredient for transformative change in women's rights and EVAWG)**. The report should highlight how civil society (diversely understood) was engaged differently through Spotlight Initiative as an SDG Fund and why these partnerships are critical (including how they contributed to the achievement of overall programme objectives and ultimately more effectively/sustainably contribute to ending violence against women and girls). Please reflect on the same **for your programme's support to movement building,** given that research has shown that the best way to advance progressive policies on addressing violence against women and girls is to sustainably invest in and resource feminist movements.[1]

- Please ensure that civil society is discussed and reflected in the report **as an equal programme partner** that 1) advised programme implementation through its meaningful engagement and representation in Civil Society Reference Groups and Steering Committees, and 2) as recipients of funds, in particular how funds reach national and grassroots orgs, women's and feminist orgs and those orgs representing marginalized groups. Please be sure to detail how such investments in civil society impacted the "bigger picture" (e.g. sustainability, ownership, accelerated achievement of rights and justice and the EVAWG).

Communications and Visibility

- Please ensure that your report includes **testimonials from a range of stakeholders,** including government, civil society, community members/rights holders, and donor(s), among others.
- Please ensure that stories are developed in line with the **Spotlight Initiative Web-writing guidelines** (issue, action and impact model).

[1] See for example: S. Laurel Weldon & Mala Htun (2013) Feminist mobilisation and progressive policy change: why governments take action to combat violence against women, Gender & Development, 21:2, 231-247, DOI: 10.1080/13552074.2013.802158

- Please ensure that the "Communications and visibility" section of your report includes all relevant communications activities implemented during your programme's lifetime, capturing your **concrete achievements.**
- Please also ensure that you develop your subsequent year Communications and Visibility Annual Plan (Annex F) ahead of time and attach it to your annual report.

Donor Partnership

- Please ensure that the **partnership and engagement with your programme's Donor(s) is well-reflected throughout** your annual report. Please note that donors are increasingly more interested in being regarded as a true partner (instead of just a source of funding).

Tips on the tone of your report

- Please ensure that the overall "tone" of the report is positive and constructive.
- While it is important to report on the challenges your programme may have faced, the report should present these constructively and focus on mitigating measures. Please detail how your programme is learning from these and adapting.
- Please consider whether a challenge – especially more "internal" UN ones around coordination, collaboration, and delivery – needs to be included in your annual report, or if instead it might be better raised (and addressed) elsewhere.

Capturing + Communicating Results

- As noted above: Please try to capture the change to which you're contributing, highlighting how your programme's activities and interventions contributed to changes (i.e. the *results* of these activities): what *has changed or is expected to change* in the lives of rights holders, partners and stakeholders because of the interventions you've implemented? Which systems, structures, or processes have been strengthened or adapted? Which capacities have been strengthened and for whom? Why is this change or result significant / why does it matter in your context? Use of change language is important to ensure a high quality, results based report.

Spotlight Initiative's Ways of Working (WoW) Metics

- Please note that Spotlight programmes will be asked to report (through a simple survey) on a set of indicators (the ways of working indicators at the bottom of the Initiative-wide results framework) on how Spotlight programmes are working in line with UN Reform. These will be reporting during the reporting season (Q1 of the following year) but separate from programme results reporting.
- Stay tuned for more information on this!

Tip 11 (Bonus Tip_: Use the available Guidance and Support

These and all other reporting tips and guidance can be found in **Spotlight Initiative's Virtual Library**. Commonly asked questions and answers can be found in the Reporting FAQ