

Evaluation Synthesis of Organizational Culture

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Assignment No: IED-20-004

Inspection and Evaluation Division

Function

“The Office shall evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the programmes and legislative mandates of the Organization. It shall conduct programme evaluations with the purpose of establishing analytical and critical evaluations of the implementation of programmes and legislative mandates, examining whether changes therein require review of the methods of delivery, the continued relevance of administrative procedures and whether the activities correspond to the mandates as they may be reflected in the approved budgets and the medium-term plan of the Organization” (General Assembly resolution 48/218 B).

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Executive Summary

This synthesis review provides an over-arching summary of key Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)-Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) results and recommendations pertaining to the topic of Organizational culture. This is the first of several anticipated OIOS-IED synthesis reports that will pull together evidence from different inspections and evaluations on topics of strategic importance to the United Nations Secretariat, in order to speak collectively on their relevance and impact on the critical work of the Organization. It is meant to facilitate a learning process by sharing trends and insights that can be helpful to senior leaders.

The Secretary-General has identified the transformation of Organizational culture as a central tenet of United Nations reform in enabling the Organization to better deliver results in order to improve the lives of those it serves. In particular, he has called for a culture focused on results, risk management, tolerance for mistakes, innovation, empowerment and accountability.

For the purpose of this synthesis review, Organizational culture was defined as “the behaviours and underlying beliefs, assumptions and values that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization and affect how people think, act and interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders”. A total of 37 inspection and evaluation reports published by OIOS-IED since 2017, covering 29 United Nations entities, were included in the review. Evaluation and inspection results and recommendations were discussed with regard to seven dimensions of Organizational culture: accountability; teamwork and collaboration; leadership; morale; gender; risk appetite; and ethics and integrity.

Across these seven dimensions OIOS-IED inspections and evaluations have most commonly pointed to weaker systems of accountability, insufficient teamwork and internal collaboration, poor leadership and low morale as negatively impacting the achievement of results. On the other hand, strong leadership, along with good gender parity, were identified as the most common enabling factors to positive performance.

Based on the most prevalent issues related to Organizational culture identified in the synthesis review, there are key take-aways for programme managers as they continue to strengthen their work and produce even stronger results for the United Nations. These include:

- **Strengthening accountability** by: introducing and integrating robust monitoring and evaluation into programme operations; enhancing performance management so that it is a meaningful exercise that encourages positive behavior and results and addresses poor behavior and results; thinking more strategically about what outcomes should be achieved and how to achieve and measure those outcomes, including through the development of a clear theory of change; and clearly defining roles and responsibilities in determining who has authority and responsibility for delivering programme outcomes.

- **Promoting greater teamwork and collaboration:** by strengthening communication and knowledge sharing; breaking down internal siloes; and better integrating headquarters and field operations.
- **Exercising strong leadership** through defining and communicating a clear vision for achieving programme goals, ensuring internal management structures are sound and conducive to positive programme performance, and demonstrating and encouraging behavior that is consistent with the desired cultural norms and standards.
- **Encouraging greater risk** be taken in looking for new and innovative ways in delivering a programme of work, while at the same time respecting mandates.
- **Paying close attention to staff morale** by giving due consideration to work-life balance and a work environment characterized by mutual trust and support.
- **Ensuring gender is well mainstreamed** through equal professional opportunities for all staff and giving due consideration to gender issues at the policy and operational level.

There are also key take-aways for UN reform. Many of the reform elements introduced across the three interlinked pillars of management, peace and security and development present real opportunities to enhance the Organizational culture in the UN in ways that make it an even stronger institution. However, gaps still remain that are not covered by the reform, including:

- **the lack of real change to the performance management system**, particularly regarding the needed behavioral change of supervisors in providing performance feedback, so that it becomes a meaningful process that promotes accountability and facilitates and supports the professional development and growth of staff at all levels;
- **the absence or fragmentation of knowledge management strategies** which fail to bring together and share the collective Organization-wide experience and expertise of staff across all sectors and pillars;
- **the absence of any dedicated and proactive measures to encourage, promote, facilitate and reward risk-taking and innovation;**
- **continued shortcomings in monitoring and evaluation**, including insufficient resources, lack of clear theories of change, inadequate performance frameworks, inadequate evaluation coverage, and limited capacity; and
- **no clear strategy for how to create the Organizational culture envisioned by the Secretary-General.**

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1. The Secretary-General has identified the transformation of Organizational culture as a central tenet of United Nations reform in enabling the Organization to better deliver results in order to improve the lives of those it serves. In particular, he has called for a culture focused on results, risk management, tolerance for mistakes, innovation, empowerment and accountability.¹ Since launching the reform, the Secretariat Staff Engagement Survey undertaken in 2019 has identified shortcomings in Organizational culture as one of the critical risks facing the United Nations Secretariat.²

2. Accordingly, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) has identified Organizational culture as a priority focus area in carrying out its work, and the Inspection and Evaluation Division (IED) has integrated culture into recent inspections and evaluations by incorporating the topic in the scope of its assessments.

3. In order to help decision-makers better understand trends across the Organization on matters related to culture, and how those trends impact Organizational performance, OIOS-IED has prepared this synthesis report by aggregating and summarizing evidence on the topic across its recent body of inspection and evaluation reports. This is the first of several anticipated OIOS-IED synthesis reports that will pull together evidence from different inspections and evaluations on topics of strategic importance to the United Nations Secretariat, in order to speak collectively on their relevance and impact on the critical work of the Organization.

1.2. Objective

4. This synthesis review provides an over-arching summary of key OIOS-IED inspection and evaluation results and recommendations pertaining to the topic of Organizational culture. It is meant to facilitate a learning process by sharing trends and insights that can be helpful to senior leaders.

1.3. Approach

5. The United Nations Secretariat does not have a single, formal definition of Organizational culture, but rather a compilation of normative frameworks, staff regulations and rules, and other guidance. Building on these, as well as on well-established external methodologies, OIOS developed internal guidelines for assessing Organizational culture which included the following definition: “the behaviours and underlying beliefs, assumptions and values that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization and affect how people think, act

¹ A/72/492

² DMPSC, Risk Register: United Nations Secretariat, Dec 2019

and interact with each other, with clients, and with stakeholders”.³ This definition was used for the purpose of the synthesis review.

6. In aggregating evidence, this synthesis was guided by the following two key questions:

- What patterns of thought and behaviour are conveyed in OIOS-IED reports?
- How does Organizational culture impact, either positively or negatively, programme results?

7. To answer those questions, the synthesis review adopted the analytical approach outlined in Box 1.

Box 1. Summary of analytical approach

1. Identify relevant OIOS-IED reports for synthesis based on a content scan going back three years to 2017
2. Create a database using OIOS-IED reports as the units of analysis
3. Label and create list of over-arching dimensions of Organizational culture
4. Review reports and code (through NVivo) OIOS-IED report results and recommendations
5. Extract over-arching trends, including frequency of references, regarding enabling and constraining culture factors to programme performance

8. Following step 1 above, 37 inspection and evaluation reports published by OIOS-IED since 2017, covering 29 United Nations entities, were identified for the review. While most reports did not explicitly assess Organizational culture, all of them had relevant content that was coded.

9. For step 2, a database was created with each of the 37 reports as the units of analysis. As shown in Table 1, the 37 reports covered all four thematic areas of work of the Secretariat.

Table 1. Synthesis coverage of OIOS inspection and evaluations by thematic area

Entity thematic areas	# of reports covered in synthesis
Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance	7
Organizational Management and Support	7
Peace and Security	13
Sustainable Development	10
Total	37

³ OIOS, Practice Guide for Assessing Organizational Culture, 2019

10. For Step 3, a list of over-arching dimensions was developed, based on the primary dimensions of Organizational culture identified in the 2019 OIOS Practice Guide. These were the most common dimensions in the 37 IED reports reviewed.

Figure 1. **Over-arching dimensions for Organizational culture synthesis review**

Accountability	•Governance, results-orientation, performance management**, monitoring and evaluation
Teamwork and collaboration	•Silos, internal communication***, knowledge management
Leadership	•Vision, organizational change/reform, power dynamics****
Risk appetite	•Innovation, bold action, calculated risks
Morale	•Work-life balance, turnover, openness, fairness, motivation, trust
Gender*	•Equity, gender gaps, discrimination
Ethics and integrity	•Misconduct, wrongdoing

* “Gender” is not included in the OIOS guidelines but was widely reported on in the IED reports

** “Performance management/reward systems” was listed as a separate dimension in the OIOS Guidelines but subsumed under “Accountability” for the purpose of this review

*** “Communication” was listed as a separate dimension in the OIOS Guidelines but subsumed under “Teamwork and Collaboration” for the purpose of this review

**** “Power dynamics” was listed as a separate dimension in the OIOS Guidelines but subsumed under “Leadership” for the purpose of this review

11. The results of steps 4 (reviewing and coding extracts from the reports) and 5 (analysis of overarching trend) are presented in Section 2 of this report.

1.4. Limitations

12. This synthesis review encountered three main methodological limitations. First, the findings of this review should not be considered as fully representative of Organizational culture across the United Nations Secretariat: the 37 reports assessed do not cover seven entities regularly evaluated by OIOS.⁴ Second, there is possible research bias given that the analysis may be biased towards elements of Organizational culture that constrained rather than enabled performance, due to the minimal focus in IED reports on the latter. Third, given the different approaches used by IED teams in assessing Organizational culture in different entities – either directly or indirectly – inter-rater reliability is not known, and some interpretation was needed to code and analyse findings.

⁴ These seven entities are: Department of Safety and Security, International Trade Centre, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Nairobi, and United Nations Office at Vienna.

2. Results by Organizational culture dimension

2.1. Accountability

Guiding definition

13. The guiding definition of accountability, in the context of Organizational culture, is spelled out by the General Assembly as the “obligation of the Secretariat and its staff members to be answerable for all decisions made and actions taken by them, and to be responsible for honouring their commitments, without qualification or exception”.⁵ This comprises issues related to performance management and results-orientation, including monitoring, reporting and evaluation functions.

Overview of related evaluation and inspection results

14. A total of 33 IED reports commented on accountability, with 155 specific coded references, as shown in Table 2. This constituted the most commonly covered dimension of Organizational culture in IED reports across all four thematic areas.

Table 2. Coding results for accountability

Entity thematic areas	# coded references	# coded reports
Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance	35	6
Organizational Management and Support	24	7
Peace and Security	53	11
Sustainable Development	44	9
Total	155	33

15. More than half (18) of the 33 IED reports found that results-orientation was inadequate, including as related to weak monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems. Commonly highlighted areas needing improvement included:

- Inadequate assessment of planned objectives, including as a result of inconsistent performance indicators against which entities reported;
- Poor quality of and/or access to monitoring data and/or information technology systems to allow for analysis and measurement of certain expected outcomes;
- Excessive focus on compliance or outputs rather than results;
- Weak performance indicators and measurement frameworks;
- Lack of clearly delineated roles and responsibilities on questions of authority and decision-making;
- Cumbersome reporting requirements;
- Limited programmatic results orientation;
- Limited planning due to donor priorities; and

⁵ A/73/688; A/RES/64/259

- Weak governance systems to enforce accountability.

16. Regarding performance management, an important component contributing to a culture of accountability, shortcomings were widely noted despite recent Organizational reforms⁶. Four reports noted that performance management was: more of a mechanical system than a meaningful feedback process; time-consuming; minimally effective in addressing poor performance; and/or limited in providing accountability for misconduct. Another report also highlighted the inconsistent completion of senior leader compacts as an additional performance management shortcoming hindering accountability.

17. Specific results on evaluation culture were mixed⁷. Nearly half of Secretariat focal points (13) reported that a poor culture of evaluation was a top inhibiting factor for the increased use and utility of the evaluation function as an accountability tool. Even in those entities assessed as having a strong evaluation function, the use of evaluation to strengthen accountability was perceived to be limited by staff turnover, limited knowledge management practices, and inadequate monitoring and oversight in field offices.

18. On the positive side, several reports highlighted relatively strong monitoring and results-based management systems. In two reports, one entity's work in the health sector was characterized by regular monitoring through surveys, meetings and reports that were considered key sources of information, despite some issues with implementing partners and outcome monitoring globally. In another, the Civil Affairs Division of a peacekeeping mission was recognized for its important stabilizing effect thanks to its field monitoring and reporting activities. Two additional reports identified entities with stronger monitoring capacity and results-based approaches, despite specific issues with data rigor and availability.

Overview of related recommendations

19. A total of 26 IED reports made recommendations related to the Organizational culture dimension of accountability, focusing specifically on:

- **Strengthening monitoring, evaluation and/or results reporting functions** through improvements to policy and practice (21 reports);
- **Improving internal accountability** through more clearly articulated roles and responsibilities and/or revision of standard operating procedures (11 reports); and
- **Improving performance management approaches**, including senior management compacts and dialogue to determine accountability (15 reports).

⁶ As referenced in the General Assembly resolution on management reform, A/RES/72/266B

⁷ Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives, A/74/67

2.2 Teamwork and collaboration

Guiding definition

20. The guiding definition of teamwork and collaboration, in the context of Organizational culture and as referred to in the United Nations core competencies, is how staff members within an entity work together, including sharing, managing and using information, in order to collaborate to achieve common goals and put the interests of the Organization above their own.

Overview of related inspection and evaluation results

21. A total of 30 IED reports commented on teamwork and collaboration, with 129 specific coded references, as shown in Table 3. This was the second most commonly coded dimension of Organizational culture in this synthesis review.

Table 3. Coding results for teamwork and collaboration

Entity thematic areas	# coded references	# coded reports
Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance	19	5
Organizational Management and Support	17	5
Peace and Security	56	11
Sustainable Development	37	9
Total	129	30

22. Ten reports identified operational and communication siloes within entities with complex structural arrangements that encompassed both headquarters and field offices. These siloes were exemplified by:

- Limited field-based input on talking points for relevant senior-level United Nations staff;
- Lack of coordination, including use of a shared language, between headquarters- and field-based social media accounts;
- Limited sharing of information and experience across field presences;
- Distinct work cultures across different programme office locations;
- Competition for resources; and
- Uncoordinated and overly top-down communication between headquarters and the field.

23. Six reports noted siloes specifically in the peace and security pillar, including between peacekeeping military components and headquarters. Power dynamics, politics, work demands, and different working cultures were variables reported to have hindered the flow of information in the peace and security context. In peacekeeping missions, other context-specific challenges that hampered the flow of information between components were related to data security issues and different military contingents.

24. Five reports discussed limited teamwork and collaboration within entities across subprogrammes, core functions, and/or sectoral areas, despite their need to work together in a more integrated manner in order to support achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. In one example, programming for one sector was not integrated with other relevant sectors, hampering the delivery of planned services. In another, internal collaboration was noted as a challenge in one office where high-intensity work demands made teamwork secondary to delivering on immediate priorities. An additional example was provided in the lack of an integrated programmatic approach across the global, regional and country levels.

25. Furthermore, five reports identified fragmentation in carrying out key functions – such as strategic planning and technical assistance – where effective internal collaboration was needed to achieve programme objectives. Examples of this fragmentation included: internal collaboration that was hampered by a “work culture of rivalries” based on competition for resources; informal modalities for information-sharing across organizational units; and a lack of integrated programme planning with the use of consistent performance measures across organizational units.

26. Poor knowledge management was discussed as hindering teamwork and collaboration in 12 reports. The flow of information facilitated by systematic knowledge management processes was lacking across many entities for operational, programmatic and learning purposes; many of these entities relied on institutional memory and/or ad-hoc systems for sharing information and knowledge. Furthermore, some entities produced significant amounts of knowledge but lacked the systems for harnessing and disseminating that knowledge. In another entity, knowledge sharing was perceived to be hampered due to the lack of open debate in staff meetings.

27. IED reports identified few positive examples of internal teamwork and collaboration. These included: implementation of cross-cutting thematic focus areas that helped to support collaboration across subprogrammes; caseload distribution and other aspects of organizational structure that facilitated internal communication; and good responsiveness of technical subprogrammes to requests for contributions to substantive flagship publications. In the peacekeeping context, human rights components were generally positively assessed for information-sharing with other mission components, and mission personnel generally found internal collaboration to be effective, as facilitated by co-location of sections/components within missions.

Recommendations

28. A total of 19 IED reports made recommendations related to the Organizational culture dimension of teamwork and collaboration, focusing specifically on:

- Encouraging organizational units to work more collaboratively and with an integrated approach - horizontally across headquarters units and vertically between headquarters and the field; and
- Strengthening knowledge management approaches, strategies and other communication for learning and decision-making purposes.

2.3 Leadership

Guiding definition

29. The guiding definition of leadership, in the context of Organizational culture and as referred to in the United Nations core competencies, is the actions taken by senior leaders of the United Nations to enable achievement of their respective mandates, including as evidenced by issues of overall vision and efforts around reform or change management processes.

Overview of related evaluation and inspection results

30. A total of 25 IED reports commented on leadership, with 75 specific coded references, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Coding results for leadership

Entity thematic areas	# coded references	# coded reports
Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance	15	5
Organizational Management and Support	11	3
Peace and Security	29	8
Sustainable Development	20	9
Total	75	25

31. Eight reports highlighted inadequate vision at the senior leadership level, as identified by staff and stakeholders interviewed.⁸ This included a lack of management cohesion around commonly shared programme goals, making mandate delivery and the undertaking of key activities uneven. Furthermore, the absence of senior leadership vision for and involvement in responding to protection of civilian incidents and monitoring human rights violations was reported in some peacekeeping settings. Less proactive leadership was also identified as a key internal factor contributing to uneven delivery of another entity's advocacy mandate.

32. In other entities, internal management reform was considered as having negatively impacted performance. These examples included: the introduction of a matrix management structure without an adequate accompanying change management processes; constant restructuring and shifting programme priorities; lack of adequate guidance on structural changes; and incomplete reform implementation.

33. Three reports also commented on whether Organizational culture had facilitated the implementation of senior leadership UN reform agenda. In one report, the consolidation of peace and security pillars was deemed to be in progress due to the merging of different working cultures, while in another report, needed change management for adapting to development reform

⁸ Note that the number of reports referencing this area would increase significantly if broadening the theme of *vision* to include the closely related area of *strategic planning*.

had not yet occurred. A third report conveyed that elements of management reform were appropriately addressing human resource issues requiring attention.

34. On a more positive note, strong senior leadership was identified as a key performance factor in several entities, especially those engaged with humanitarian affairs and human rights. For example, senior leaders in advocacy functions had effectively leveraged their respective positions to enable their offices to achieve their goals, and strong leadership in field offices was linked to the adoption of successful innovative practices that helped meet demand surges and provide potential for scaling-up related to refugee registration in the Middle East.

Recommendations

35. A total of 8 IED reports made recommendations related to the Organizational culture dimension of leadership, focusing specifically on:

- Establishing a more explicit overall programme vision and/or objective;
- Improving change management processes with strengthened staff inclusion, consultation and participation;
- Considering the work of the management, peace and security and development pillars in drafting system-wide strategic documents; and
- Strengthening senior leadership in peacekeeping settings, including through selecting leaders that possess requisite political experience; ensuring continuity during times of leadership changeover; ensuring training; encouraging field visits; and enhancing leadership diversity.

2.4 Risk appetite

Guiding definition

36. The guiding definition of risk appetite, in the context of Organizational culture and as understood in the context of the United Nations Enterprise Risk Management, refers to the behaviours and attitudes reflecting how an entity assumes risks to achieve its mandated work, including as evidenced by innovation and bold action.

Overview of related inspection and evaluation results

37. A total of 18 IED reports commented on risk appetite, with 45 specific coded references mostly in the peace and security sector, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Coding results for risk appetite

Entity thematic areas	# coded references	# coded reports
Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance	8	3
Organizational Management and Support	5	3
Peace and Security	26	8
Sustainable Development	6	4
Total	45	18

38. Five reports described a low risk appetite in entities that resulted in a narrow interpretation of mandates and/or the adoption of a formalistic, compliance-oriented approach to work. For example, due to a lower tolerance for risk, some inter-governmental meetings in the Secretariat followed a pro forma arrangement with limited space for real dialogue, and innovative approaches to mandate delivery were limited or non-existent. In one report, an entity explained its risk averse approach as being necessary due to concerns of political sensitivity.

39. Several reports also described how in peacekeeping settings risk aversion was of particular relevance in the context of ‘robust’ mandates. This dynamic was attributed partly to inaction of military contingents of troop contributing countries, heightened security risks, weak mission capacity, and reluctance to create tensions with the host government. At the headquarters level, risk aversion was reported as resulting in meetings with a general lack of meaningful dialogue and an environment of formalistic discussion.

40. Five reports focused specifically on the lack of innovation with regard to the adoption of up-to-date technology and appropriate reform. Examples of this included bureaucratic and out-of-date work processes, the lack of staff training for information technology and burdensome information systems being used for core work activities.

41. Nevertheless, three reports described how some entities had implemented innovative practices seen as indicative of more risk-taking, including deployment of “remote judging” allowing for case processing while enhancing cost efficiency, new tools and approaches to promoting access to space, and the use of new technology in refugee registration work, including iris scans for payment and an online application process.

Recommendations

42. A total of 5 IED reports made recommendations related to the Organizational culture dimension of risk appetite, focusing specifically on:

- Allowing for greater variation of viewpoints through “dissent channels”;
- Strengthening the use and leverage of modern tools and technology for mandate delivery, including the use of social media and systems for data management; and
- Ensuring that undue risk aversion does not interfere with mission mandate implementation, including through stronger performance management.

2.5 Morale

Guiding definition

43. The guiding definition of morale, in the context of Organizational culture, refers to staff feelings about their working environment, as exemplified by work-life balance, staff motivation, trust, health and satisfaction.

Overview of related inspection and evaluation results

44. A total of 16 IED reports commented on morale, with 29 specific coded references mostly in the peace and security sector, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. **Coding results for morale**

Entity thematic areas	# coded references	# coded reports
Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance	2	2
Organizational Management and Support	3	2
Peace and Security	16	6
Sustainable Development	8	6
Total	29	16

45. Six reports specifically discussed various aspects of poor morale. In three of these, staff morale was negatively impacted by challenges in delivering significant workloads and the resulting staff stress and increased need for sick leave. Three other reports attributed low morale to poor leadership, unreasonable staff demands, “hostile” operating environments in which staff faced security threats, volatile job security, limited opportunities for advancement and restricted physical access to undertake activities.

46. Conversely, several reports identified good staff morale and work-life balance, as determined through staff surveys and interviews as well as direct observation, as positively contributing to performance in several entities. In other reports, staff were recognized for their strong work ethic and skills, thus positively contributing to morale.

Recommendations

47. A total of 2 IED reports made recommendations related to the Organizational culture dimension of morale, focusing specifically on:

- Implementing a staff survey to identify key concerns around downsizing in order to better manage staff morale; and
- Identifying root causes of low morale among female personnel.

2.6 Gender

Guiding definition

48. The guiding definition of gender, in the context of Organizational culture, refers to efforts by entities to address internal gender mainstreaming, including processes of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action related to entity management.

Overview of related inspection and evaluation results

49. A total of 6 IED reports commented on gender, with 15 specific coded references mostly in the peace and security sector, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Coding results for gender

Entity thematic areas	# coded references	# coded reports
Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance	0	0
Organizational Management and Support	1	1
Peace and Security	13	4
Sustainable Development	1	1
Total	15	6

50. Four reports raised concerns related to gender. One noted an entity's ongoing gender imbalance, including in leadership positions, while another raised gender concerns such as lower performance ratings for female staff and gender discrimination and prejudice, particularly among middle level managers. In one report, the morale of female staff in peacekeeping missions, notably among civilian personnel, was low. Another report identified a lack of gender balance in training workshops, as well as limitations on the extent to which programme interventions were gender transformative.

51. On the other hand, two reports recognized entities as having made important advances for promoting gender equality internally, including one which had achieved gender balance in Director positions and instituted regular consideration of gender in management decisions and another which promoted gender equality at the institutional, strategic and operational levels.

Recommendations

52. Two IED reports made recommendations related to the Organizational culture dimension of gender, focusing specifically on:

- Monitoring gender balance and parity in line with the Secretary-General's gender strategy;
- Enforcing completion of required trainings related to gender mainstreaming goals; and
- Initiating dialogue on concerns related to increasing female staff.

2.7 Ethics and integrity

Guiding definition

53. The guiding definition of ethics and integrity, in the context of Organizational culture, refers to issues of misconduct and wrongdoing within United Nations entities, including criminal and sanctionable activity.

Overview of related inspection and evaluation results

54. A total of 4 IED reports commented on ethics and integrity, with 15 specific coded references exclusively in the peace and security sector, as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. **Coding results for ethics and integrity***

Entity thematic areas	# coded references	# coded reports
Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance	0	0
Organizational Management and Support	0	0
Peace and Security	15	4
Sustainable Development	0	0
Total	15	4

*As based on the definition above

55. In the few reports in which ethics and integrity were discussed in peacekeeping settings, concerns were raised about cases of serious misconduct following the re-hatting of non-United Nations military personnel, including criminal activity, sexual exploitation and abuse, and other misconduct towards civilians, as well as perceptions by personnel about misconduct, unethical behaviour, and a 'culture of impunity'.

Recommendations

56. Two IED reports made recommendations related to the Organizational culture dimension of ethics and integrity, focusing specifically on:

- Developing policy guidance to clarify the roles of third-party defence companies in peacekeeping operational spaces for addressing conflict of interest; and
- Determining the extent of theft, fraud and corruption in missions.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Organizational culture and programme performance

57. This synthesis report provides an over-arching assessment of how different dimensions of Organizational culture have both constrained and enabled programme performance, as

highlighted in Table 9. When looked at as a whole, and keeping in mind the non-representative and possible research bias noted earlier as limitations, the current Organizational culture of Secretariat entities as defined in this synthesis review suggest that it does not consistently support and enable the achievement of programme results.

58. Across the dimensions of Organizational culture assessed in this exercise, IED inspections and evaluations have most commonly pointed to weaker systems of accountability, insufficient teamwork and internal collaboration, poor leadership and low morale as negatively impacting the achievement of results. On the other hand, strong leadership, along with good gender parity, were identified as the most common enabling factors to positive performance.

Table 9. Coding results by constraining and enabling factors to programme performance*

Organizational culture dimension	Constraining factor		Enabling factor	
	% coded references	% coded reports	% coded references	% coded reports
Accountability	53%	82%	17%	32%
Teamwork and collaboration	66%	96%	14%	39%
Leadership	57%	80%	23%	56%
Risk appetite	66%	72%	20%	33%
Morale	57%	81%	25%	40%
Gender	46%	67%	23%	60%
Ethics and integrity	73%	75%	0%	0%

*Not all coded references could be defined as a constraining and/or enabling factor. Only those where such a link could be made are included in this table.

59. IED recommendations pertaining to different dimensions of Organizational culture were largely focused on addressing shortcomings in accountability, and teamwork and collaboration, as shown in Table 10. The substance of the recommendations is provided above in the individual sections for each dimension.

Table 10. Coding results for recommendations by percentage of coded reports

Organizational culture dimension	% coded reports with relevant recommendation(s)
Accountability	79%
Teamwork and collaboration	63%
Ethics and integrity	50%
Gender	40%
Leadership	33%
Risk appetite	28%
Morale	12%

3.2 Implications for UN response to COVID-19 pandemic

60. As this report is being finalized during a time of global crisis brought on with the COVID-19 pandemic, a multidimensional crisis with far-ranging health, social, economic and environmental implications, its findings and conclusions must be considered within that context. United Nations entities will need to re-purpose and re-programme their work streams, notwithstanding unprecedented financial and operational challenges, to ensure that immediate, intermediate and long-term Member State needs are addressed. In order to do so efficiently and effectively, the United Nations will need an appropriate Organizational culture – one that is agile, innovative, collaborative, and willing to take risks, with strong leadership and robust accountability - in order to be able to respond as one United Nations to the crisis. The findings of this synthesis review suggest that that such a culture is not yet consistently in place. As the United Nations adapts its work to better support the needs of the world in this new context, to ensure that the most vulnerable countries and people are not left behind, it cannot neglect the need to address and adapt its culture.

3.3 Key take-aways for programme managers

61. Considering the most prevalent issues related to Organizational culture as discussed above, there are several areas that programme managers may want to consider as they continue to strengthen their work to produce even stronger results for the United Nations. These include:

- **Strengthening accountability** by: introducing and integrating robust monitoring and evaluation into programme operations; enhancing performance management so that it is a meaningful exercise that encourages positive behavior and results and addresses poor behavior and results; thinking more strategically about what outcomes should be achieved and how to achieve and measure those outcomes, including through the development of a clear theory of change; and clearly defining roles and responsibilities in determining who has authority and responsibility for delivering programme outcomes.
- **Promoting greater teamwork and collaboration:** by strengthening communication and knowledge sharing; breaking down internal siloes; and better integrating headquarters and field operations.
- **Exercising strong leadership** through defining and communicating a clear vision for achieving programme goals, ensuring internal management structures are sound and conducive to positive programme performance, and demonstrating and encouraging behavior that is consistent with the desired cultural norms and standards.
- **Encouraging greater risk** be taken in looking for new and innovative ways in delivering a programme of work, while at the same time respecting mandates.

- **Paying close attention to staff morale** by giving due consideration to work-life balance and a work environment characterized by mutual trust and support.
- **Ensuring gender is well mainstreamed** through equal professional opportunities for all staff and giving due consideration to gender issues at the policy and operational level.

3.4 Key take-aways for the UN reform agenda

62. The recent Organizational reforms across the three interlinked pillars of management, peace and security and development are addressing several of the take-away points listed above. Elements of the reform present real opportunities to enhance the Organizational culture in the UN in ways that make it an even stronger institution.

63. The management reform addresses the following issues:

- dedicated focus on gender parity;
- enhanced authority and accountability for programme managers through enhanced measures for delegation of authority;
- steps to improve speed and responsiveness in service delivery;
- streamlining of the budget process to improve the planning for and presentation of performance information;
- enhancements to senior leadership training programmes;
- changes to Organizational management structures to better support programme delivery; and
- follow-up to regular staff engagement surveys to address issues of staff morale.

64. The peace and security reform addresses the following issues:

- restructuring and refocusing the work of the Organization along a continuum from keeping to building and sustaining peace, in a way that enhances collaboration and teamwork between work units and activities that had previously been siloed; and
- taking a “whole of pillar” approach between peace and security, development and human rights.

65. The development reform addresses the following issues:

- the creation of normative frameworks that harness individual entity strengths and value adds for a more holistic approach;
- the creation of a new generation of UN Country Teams that operate on the principle of teamwork and collaboration and take a more demand-driven and focused approach to meeting country-specific priorities; and
- a stronger leadership role and model for the Resident Coordinators as the representatives of the Secretary-General at the country level.

66. At the same time, however, gaps remain that are not covered by the UN reform agenda. These include:

- **the lack of real change to the performance management system, particularly regarding the needed behavioral change of supervisors in providing performance feedback, so that it becomes a meaningful process that promotes accountability and facilitates and supports the professional development and growth of staff at all levels;**
- **the absence or fragmentation of knowledge management strategies which fail to bring together and share the collective Organization-wide experience and expertise of staff across all sectors and pillars;**
- **the absence of any dedicated and proactive measures to encourage, promote, facilitate and reward risk-taking and innovation;**
- **continued shortcomings in monitoring and evaluation, including insufficient resources, lack of clear theories of change, inadequate performance frameworks, inadequate evaluation coverage, and limited capacity; and**
- **no clear strategy for how to create the Organizational culture envisioned by the Secretary-General.**

4. Annexes

4.1. List of IED evaluations and inspections reviewed

The 37 IED reports below published as final or in draft since 2017 comprise the evidence base reviewed for this synthesis report. Reports still in draft at the time of this synthesis analysis are highlighted in yellow.

	Issue Date*	Entity	Entity**	Report No	Title	Type
1.	09-Mar-20	OHRLLS	OHRLLS	IED-20-003	Evaluation of OHRLLS	Programme Evaluation
2.	Draft	NEPAD	NEPAD	IED-19-018	Evaluation of Support to NEPAD	Programme Evaluation
3.	XXXXXX	DPPA	DPPA	IED-20-001	Evaluation of DPPA early warning / conflict prevention	Programme Evaluation
4.	17-Feb-17	DPKO, DFS	DPO	A/71/798	Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services: review and evaluation of strategic deployment stocks	Programme Evaluation
5.	12-Feb-18	MINUSMA, MINUSCA, DPKO, DFS, OHCHR	DPO	IED-18-002	Evaluation of re-hatting in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)	Programme Evaluation
6.	13-Jun-19	UN Secretariat	Thematic	IED-19-001	Evaluation of United Nations entities' the preparedness, policy coherence and early results associated with their support to Sustainable Development Goals	Thematic Evaluation
7.	22-Mar-19	UNEP	UNEP	E/AC.51/2019/7	Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme	Programme Evaluation
8.	13-Mar-19	DGACM	DGACM	E/AC.51/2019/5	Evaluation of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management	Programme Evaluation
9.	25-Feb-19	DM	DMSPC	E/AC.51/2019/3	Evaluation of the Office of Human Resources Management	Programme Evaluation
10.	22-Feb-19	DPI	DGC	E/AC.51/2019/2	Evaluation of the Department of Public Information	Programme Evaluation
11.	17-Feb-17	EOSG	EOSG	E/AC.51/2017/7	Evaluation of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General	Programme Evaluation
12.	20-Mar-19	UN Secretariat	Thematic	A/74/67	Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives	Thematic Evaluation

13.	17-Mar-17	UN Secretariat	Thematic	A/72/72	Strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives	Thematic Evaluation
14.	25-Mar-19	OLA	OLA	E/AC.51/2019/9	Evaluation of the Office of Legal Affairs	Programme Evaluation
15.	08-Mar-18	MICT	IRMCT	S/2018/206	Evaluation of the methods and work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	Programme Evaluation
16.	21-Mar-17	UNHCR	UNHCR	E/AC.51/2017/10	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for 2017	Programme Evaluation
17.	12-Jan-17	UNHCR	UNHCR	E/AC.51/2017/2	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Programme Evaluation
18.	25-Mar-19	UNHCR	UNHCR	E/AC.51/2019/8	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Programme Evaluation
19.	12-Jan-17	UNRWA	UNRWA	E/AC.51/2017/3	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	Programme Evaluation
20.	14-Mar-19	CAAC, SVC, VAC	OSRSGs	E/AC.51/2019/6	Evaluation of the Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, on Sexual Violence in Conflict and on Violence against Children	Programme Evaluation
21.	26-Apr-19	DOS, DPO	DPO	IED-19-007	Evaluation of the contribution of the UNMISS Civil Affairs Division to the reduction of local conflict in South Sudan	Programme Evaluation
22.	12-Jan-17	DPA	DPPA	E/AC.51/2017/6	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs	Programme Evaluation
23.	30-Jul-18	DPKO, DFS	DPO	IED-18-010	Inspection of the performance of missions' operational responses to Protection of Civilians (POC) related incidents	Inspection
24.	07-Apr-17	DPKO, DFS	DPO	IED-17-001	Evaluation of DPKO/DFS Planning during the Force Generation Process and Related Engagement with the Security Council and Troop-Contributing Countries	Thematic Evaluation
25.	02-Oct-17	DPKO, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, MINUSCA	DPO	IED-17-013	Evaluation of the effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations in deterring and confronting armed elements in	Thematic Evaluation

					the DRC, Mali and the Central African Republic	
26.	12-Jan-17	ECE	ECE	E/AC.51/2017/5	Evaluation of the Economic Commission for Europe	Programme Evaluation
27.	12-Jan-17	ESCWA	ESCWA	E/AC.51/2017/4	Evaluation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Programme Evaluation
28.	21-Mar-17	OCHA	OCHA	E/AC.51/2017/11	Evaluation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	Programme Evaluation
29.	17-Mar-17	OHCHR	OHCHR	E/AC.51/2017/9	Evaluation of the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights	Programme Evaluation
30.	08-Mar-19	OHCHR, DPO, DMSPC	Thematic	IED-19-004	Evaluation of the effectiveness of human rights monitoring, reporting and follow-up in the United Nations multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations	Thematic Evaluation
31.	08-Mar-19	OOSA	OOSA	IED-19-003	Evaluation of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs	Programme Evaluation
32.	17-Mar-17	Regional commissions	Thematic	E/AC.51/2017/8	Thematic evaluation of the regional commissions	Thematic Evaluation
33.	07-Mar-19	UNODA	UNODA	E/AC.51/2019/4	Evaluation of the Office for Disarmament Affairs	Programme Evaluation
34.	04-May-20	UNODC	UNODC	IED-19-016	Evaluation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime	Programme evaluation
35.	28-May-20	UN Women	UN Women	IED-19-012	Inspection of evaluation function	Inspection
36.	10-June-20	DESA	DESA	IED-19-015	Evaluation of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs	Programme evaluation
37.	Draft*	DPO	DPO		Evaluation of DPO mission organizational culture	Thematic Evaluation

*This report is still a draft

**Revised for analysis and consistency based on structural changes since 2019

Source: oios.un.org/inspection-evaluation-reports

4.2. List of acronyms

DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DGACM	Department for General Assembly and Conference Management
DGC	Department of Global Communications*
DMSPC	Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance*
DOS	Department of Operational Support*
DPO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations*
DPPA	Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs*
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary-General
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
IRMCT	International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals*
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Office for Disarmament Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHRLS	Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
OOSA	Office for Outer Space Affairs
OSAA	Office of the Special Adviser on Africa
OSRSGs	Offices of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, on Sexual Violence in Conflict and on Violence against Children
UN Women	United Nations Entity for the Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

*Office/entity title changed from initial report publication