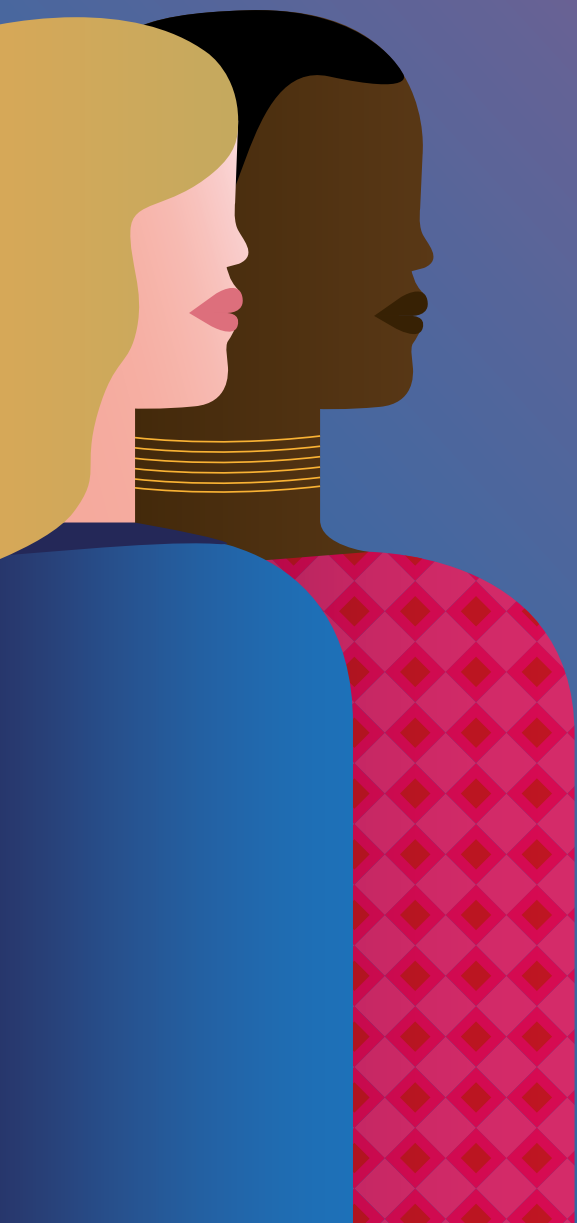


In Focus: South-South Cooperation

Extract from UN Women
Fund for Gender Equality's
Annual Report 2018-2019



South-South and triangular cooperation are increasingly recognized as primary accelerators in achieving the global SDGs. Knowledge exchange between countries and development partners has significant potential to define the most powerful gender equality strategies and policies. Key issues include ensuring the central role of civil society and reaching women and girls in marginalized positions.

In its fourth grantmaking cycle, the FGE launched a South-South initiative to enhance grantees' capacities to achieve lasting impacts. Through exchange visits between grantees from different countries working on similar issues, the FGE aimed to: (1) foster the sharing of knowledge, including results, challenges, opportunities, experiences and lessons learned; and (2) explore collaboration in advancing common gender equality priorities.

The visits go beyond classrooms or classical convenings. They power dynamic, field-level exchanges on actual change models with a strong possibility for replication and scaling up. Issues covered so far by grantees from Armenia, Kenya, Lebanon and Nigeria have included the promotion of women's entrepreneurship in agri-business; access to social protection, in particular for women in the informal sector; and women's participation in electoral processes.

Several additional exchanges are now in the works, starting with a grantee visit from Palestine to Paraguay on advocacy models to redefine public debate around equality and non-discrimination for domestic workers. Grantees from Algeria and Tanzania will have the opportunity to share ideas and strategies around improving rural women's access to markets, diversifying production and scaling up women's agri-businesses in marginalized communities.

Looking to the future, the FGE hopes to move beyond single visits to catalyse broader learning experiences in strategic areas such as women's entrepreneurship and market participation, or advocacy and leadership. Developing triangular cooperation through the active promotion of partnerships and links among grantees and with innovative international platforms has strong potential to deliver a multiplier effect.



Fostering South-South cooperation and knowledge exchange amongst grantees is a priority of UN Women. Not only does such cooperation help overcome the traditional North-to-South aid approach and the prescriptive development model, but it also has the potential to identify gender equality strategies beyond country borders.

Maria-Noel Vaeza,
Programme Director, UN Women

Learning from models for women's entrepreneurship in agri-business (Armenia - Lebanon)

In September 2018, the Lebanon Family Planning Association for Development and Family Empowerment (LFPAGE) visited the Green Lane Agricultural Assistance NGO (Green Lane) in Armenia to exchange insights on how to help rural women entrepreneurs improve their marketing skills, food safety techniques and quality production standards.

The FGE also backed LFPAGE's participation in the "Harvest Festival of Rural Life and Traditions", which brought together 20,000 farmers, entrepreneurs and spectators in Yerevan, Armenia. LFPAGE's beneficiaries - rural Lebanese women - exhibited their products at the event.

At the "Women in Agriculture Conference", the two grantees were among 15 women's groups supported by the FGE who shared lessons on rural women's entrepreneurial development with more than 10 national and international development agencies, ministries and UN entities.

LFPAGE and Green Lane plan to continue exchanging experiences on social enterprises and to attend joint trainings in marketing and branding with another field visit to Lebanon planned for July 2019.



Agri-business entrepreneurs attending a training course on food safety management in Tyre Region, Lebanon.

Photo Courtesy of LFPAGE / Mohammad Fawaz



By visiting Green Lane's farm, I was able to see first-hand what methods are required to produce organic foods. It inspired me to bring eco-friendly processing techniques back to our programme in Lebanon.

**Cecilia Chami,
Project Director, LFPAGE**

Strategizing to overcome roadblocks to political participation (Kenya - Nigeria)

In 2002, the African Union pledged to achieve gender parity in political participation. Countries such as Kenya and Nigeria have pledged to pursue a minimum one-third share of women in parliamentary seats, yet women have yet to attain equality in political leadership. They occupy only a fifth of seats in the Kenyan Parliament and 5.6 per cent in Nigeria's House of Representatives.

To facilitate cross-national learning on closing the gender gap, the FGE organized the "Learning and Exchange Forum" in Kenya in October 2018. The three-day event

provided a platform for two grantees, Alliances for Africa of Nigeria and Uraia Trust of Kenya, to learn from each other's experiences, share lessons and exchange best practices in overcoming barriers to women's political participation. These comprise stereotypes that discourage women from contesting elections, electoral violence and economic constraints, among others.

The two adopted a cross-border strategy to sustain their solidarity in countering common roadblocks.



Meeting of FGE grantee partners Uraia Trust and Alliances for Africa in Kenya.

Photo: Courtesy of AfA