Partners for progress

Finland is a pioneer in gender equality, and in 1906 became the first country in the world to give women both the right to vote and stand for election. As a longstanding champion of gender equality, Finland was a key advocate, among Member States, for the establishment of UN Women and remains a key partner financially and politically.

The Government of Finland and UN Women engage in annual consultations to review the progress of their partnership and ensure it is evolving to provide the value each partner expects.

Sharing common goals

As one of the three UN agencies which the Government of Finland prioritizes, UN Women strongly exemplifies Finland’s commitment to gender equality. Finland’s cooperation with UN Women has grown increasingly stronger and UN Women’s mandate and work correspond closely with the priorities of the Finnish Development Policy which includes particular emphasis on the rights of women and girls. This partnership has resulted in Finland supporting a stronger focus on women’s leadership, political participation and economic empowerment.

In 2018, Finland provided the fourth largest regular resources contribution of USD 12 million and the sixth largest contribution to total resources of USD 17 million to UN Women.
Together we achieved:

**Women's leadership in peace and security**

Finland’s thematic priorities in peacebuilding and state building focus on women’s participation. In 2018 and 2019, support has been provided for Syrian women’s engagement and leadership in peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts. Finland has also committed EUR 3.9 million to women, peace and security in the Arab States over the next three years.

Finland has been a leader on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions as well as advancing the use of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution.

Finland is supporting UN Women’s work to build Accountability for National and Regional Implementation of Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security through the Peace and Security Global Facility. This has included the establishment of the Women, Peace and Security Financing Discussion Group, the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women in Humanitarian Action, Peace and Security and the launch of several reports and support to the monitoring of the implementation of the national action plan (NAP), for example in Kosovo.

**Finland National Committee for UN Women**

The National Committee for UN Women in Finland was the first in the world, founded in 1981 at the initiative of Ms. Helvi Sipilä, who was the first woman to hold the post of Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations. Today the National Committee is a dynamic organization that works on advocacy and fundraising, with 18 local chapters.

**Political Participation**

Finland has been supporting UN Women’s work in Kenya for years to enhance the capacity of gender machineries and advocates to develop legal frameworks and policies that promote women’s leadership and participation. In 2017, the electoral outcome saw increased numbers of elected women at all levels and UN Women supported a massive voter registration process, targeting women, especially in hard to reach areas. Voter registration increased from 14 million to 19 million, with women forming 47 per cent of the register. Despite the percentage of women dropping from 49 per cent in 2013 to 47 per cent in 2017, the absolute numbers increased.

In Tanzania, Finland is supporting UN Women’s work to increase the leadership and political participation of women, youth and persons living with disabilities. Ahead of the 2015 general elections, over 1,000 women, youth and persons living with disabilities, who were aspirants for the upcoming elections were trained and, once nominated, 658 candidates received training to tweak their public speaking and campaign skills, and explore gender equality issues and barriers to women’s participation. In Tanzania, 113 seats are reserved for women. A total of 136 women (36.6 per cent) were elected to the National Assembly, an increase of seven per cent.

**Humanitarian Action**

In Jordan, Finland supports UN Women’s efforts to address the urgent needs of refugees and the needs of those living in Jordan’s hosting communities. In the Za’atari refugee camp, UN Women operates safe spaces for women and girls – and in cooperation with the WFP - offers a range of essential services including cash for work – to further nutritional diversity among female headed households, protection referral services and life skills.

In 2017 UN Women provided between 230-405 daily cash for work opportunities to women refugees through the four oases, and organized job fairs with UNHCR and ILO for women refugees to use their new skills for work permit employment opportunities. Women increased from only three per cent of work permit recipients to nine per cent by the end of the year. Given the many challenges to women’s employment (negative social norms, lack of childcare and transport) even this small change is a sign of significant progress.