



UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021- 2025



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**STRATEGIC PLAN
2021-2025**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund) would like to express its deepest appreciation and sincerest gratitude to the many contributors to the UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2021-2025, ranging from UN Member States representatives, CSOs/WROs and private sector entities' representatives, as well as distinguished ERAW and human rights experts. The full list of contributors is available under Appendix B.

Your invaluable inputs have enriched and informed the UN Trust Fund's strategic direction over the forthcoming five years and we will count on your partnership and support in making this shared vision our common reality.

A special thank you to the Strategic Advisory Group and Grantee Reference Group members for generously sharing their time and profound insight in several iterations of review and refinement of the final product that is presented here.



ABBREVIATIONS

AWID	Association for Women's Rights in Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSOs	Civil society organizations
EU/UN Spotlight Initiative	European Union and United Nations Spotlight Initiative
EVAW/G	ending violence against women and girls
GEM	gender equitable men
GEWE	gender equality and women's empowerment
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
Istanbul Convention	Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
NGOs	non-governmental organizations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
SDGs	2030 Agenda and Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals
SEA/SHA	Sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment and assault
SVRI	Sexual Violence Research Initiative
UN	United Nations
UN Trust Fund	United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
VAW/G	violence against women and girls
WHO	World Health Organization
WROs	women's rights organizations



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Women’s organizations, operating with meagre resources, are often on the front line of community response – supporting those most affected economically by the crisis, ensuring shelters remain open for domestic violence victims, and channelling public health education messages to women. Expansion and capitalization of Funds such as the UN’s Women, Peace and Humanitarian Fund or the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women must be encouraged as a means of scaling up support.”

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, *SHARED RESPONSIBILITY, GLOBAL SOLIDARITY: Responding to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 (2020)*

Violence against women and girls (VAW/G) is a grave human rights violation, with immediate and long-term physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls that can be devastating. According to latest estimates from the World Health Organization and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), almost one in three women globally had experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. The COVID-19 pandemic not only exposed the lack of preparedness of countries to respond to and deal with existing, ongoing and persistent VAW/G, it also led to a significant rise in this already prevalent human rights violation.

Human rights are at the core of the work of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (the UN Trust Fund), as reflected in its founding resolution (United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/166). The UN Trust Fund was the first, and thus far remains the only, global, multilateral grant-giving fund specialized in preventing and ending all forms of VAW/G. In the 24 years of its existence the UN Trust Fund has supported 572 initiatives to a total value of almost USD 183 million in 140 countries and territories. Since 2017 it has provided grants solely to civil society organizations (CSOs).

Despite the many challenges, there is evidence that VAW/G is preventable and there are tools to support its prevention. CSOs, especially women’s rights organizations (WROs), play an essential leadership role in initiatives to end VAW/G around the world and in delivering essential support services to survivors of violence. The strength of WROs – and feminist movements as a whole – is a key factor in driving positive change to end VAW/G. The UN Secretary-General recognized CSOs, and especially WROs, in the Beijing Platform for Action Review (2020) as key actors in advancing gender equality and ending VAW/G and called on Member States to support this role, including through funding.

This document sets out the UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2021-2025, providing a framework to guide its work over the next five years. It sets out priorities based on lessons learned during the previous Strategic Plan

period and analysis of the current context and emerging issues, as identified and validated by key stakeholders through a consultation process, including the UN Trust Fund's Programme Advisory Committee. This Strategic Plan 2021-2025 aligns with and directly contributes to key UN inter-agency initiatives, UN Joint Programmes and UN Women's work on ending VAW/G.

Accompanied by a Results Framework that translates the plan into measurable results, this Strategic Plan will enable the UN Trust Fund and stakeholders to monitor achievements, learn lessons and hold the institution accountable for the funds entrusted to it. The Strategic Plan and its intended results are *aspirational* and subject to resourcing and institutional enablement. It is intended to be operationalized in a phased manner over the next five years within the operational framework of UN Women and in partnership with others.

Grounded in feminist principles, the UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2021-2025 is based on the following core values: that the UN Trust Fund's work will continue to be led and informed by women's experiences and civil society efforts to end VAW/G, fully recognizing women's and survivors' own agency; that it will be guided by the expertise and knowledge generated by CSOs/WROs; and that it will be implemented through mutually enabling relationships with key stakeholders.

The UN Trust Fund's long-term vision is a world of global solidarity in which all women and girls live free from all forms of violence and enjoy and exercise their human rights. This vision is in line with international human rights and humanitarian law, agreed norms and standard-setting instruments at the global, regional and national levels. At an impact level the UN Trust Fund's work aims to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 5.2, to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

To help achieve this vision, the UN Trust Fund's mission over the next five years will be to enable CSOs, especially WROs and those representing the most marginalized groups, to play a central role in delivering survivor-centred and demand-driven initiatives and to support their programmes to achieve sustainable impact on ending VAW/G in a manner that contributes to global solidarity, partnerships and stronger, inclusive feminist movements. Through initiatives supported by the UN Trust Fund, more women and girls, especially the most marginalized and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination, can exercise their human right to live a life free of all forms of violence.

The UN Trust Fund will contribute to the above aspirations through specific development outputs over the next five years. These include:

- **Principled, demand-driven grant-giving and capacity development:** more CSOs and WROs will be enabled by the UN Trust Fund through long-term and flexible funding to implement demand-driven initiatives to end VAW/G, coupled with programmatic and organizational support for sustainability and resilience.
- **Collaborative and inclusive knowledge production, exchange and learning:** the UN system and key partners will be more informed by knowledge produced by CSOs/WROs and practice-based learning on efforts to end VAW/G, as well as knowledge and evaluations funded or co-produced by the UN Trust Fund.
- **Partnerships, advocacy and resource mobilization:** stakeholders will be mobilized to advocate for more flexible and long-term funding for CSOs/WROs and to amplify their voices to inform the programmatic, policy and funding decisions of the UN system, UN Member States and beyond.

The UN Trust Fund's grant selection process will progressively prioritize WROs, women and girl-led organizations, CSOs with local or community-level reach and those with an ability to ensure projects to end VAW/G have an impact on the most marginalized women and girls and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination.

Initiatives will be funded under three broad programmatic thematic areas: (1) improved access for women and girls to essential, specialist, safe and adequate multisectoral services; (2) increased effectiveness of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability; and (3) improved prevention of VAW/G through changes in behaviours, practices and attitudes.

The UN Trust Fund is uniquely able to influence these outcomes as a UN-system wide, global, grant-giving mechanism that focuses on all forms of VAW/G and that prioritizes funding for CSOs and WROs. Its 24-year institutional history, evidence of results and testimonies from partners and grantees support the case for the UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan. As a UN inter-agency mechanism, and in partnership with a range of partners (inside and outside the UN system), the UN Trust Fund will continue to play a key convening role and contribute to advancing global solidarity for transformative action to end VAW/G.



Participants, including the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (left) at the UN Trust Fund's Grantee Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019. Credits: Sulejman Omerbasic/UN Trust Fund

INTRODUCTION

1.1. About the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

Established in 1996 by United Nations General Assembly resolution 50/166, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (the UN Trust Fund) was the first and, thus far remains the only global, multilateral grant-giving fund specialized in preventing and ending all forms of violence against women and girls (VAW/G).

Human rights are at the core of the UN Trust Fund's work, reflected in its founding resolution, which recognizes that "violence against women violated and impaired or nullified the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms".¹ The UN Trust Fund's mandate emerged from and is grounded in international commitments arising from the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the Vienna Declaration on Gender-Based Violence (1993),² the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993)³ and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979.⁴

In the 24 years of its existence, the UN Trust Fund has supported 572 initiatives for a total value of almost USD183 million in 140 countries and territories. It has invested in innovative, demand-driven, evidence-based solutions and life-changing initiatives at the national and local levels.

Since 2010, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) has administered the UN Trust Fund on behalf of the United Nations (UN) system, providing a strong institutional foundation and field support through a global infrastructure of country and regional offices.

Beijing Platform for Action 1995

In September 1995, Governments participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women gathered in Beijing with the objective of advancing the goals of equality, development, and peace for all women. After substantive negotiations, they unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action — a visionary agenda for the empowerment of women and girls. At that conference, Governments agreed that women’s rights are human rights and that women and girls were entitled to live a life free from all forms of violence. Member States would bear the major responsibility for implementing the Platform for Action, but the UN system would also have a key role to play in realizing the goals of the Beijing Conference.

The UN Trust Fund’s first inter-agency consultative Programme Advisory Committee (PAC)⁵ was established in 1996. Since then, alongside non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other experts, more than 20 UN organs and bodies have actively contributed to grant-giving approval processes, providing strategic input to funding decisions, and played a vital role in driving forward collective efforts to engage the wider community in work to prevent and end VAW/G. This system-wide approach across the UN coupled with cooperation with key relevant external stakeholders contribute to UN Development System reform commitments on improved coordination, under the 2030 Agenda and Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁶

Over the past 24 years, hundreds of UN staff members and civil society experts at the country, regional and global levels have participated in supporting annual Calls for Proposals, identifying and selecting the highest quality applications under each of the 24 funding cycles. The active engagement of a wide spectrum of stakeholders in the UN Trust Fund’s grant-giving processes, at the local, regional and global levels, ensures the transparency and rigor of the selection process and contributes to strategic resourcing of civil society. Since 2017, in line with the decision of its PAC, the UN Trust Fund has provided grants solely to civil society organizations (CSOs),⁷ with a focus on women’s rights organizations (WROs).⁸

1.2. About the UN Trust Fund’s role within UN Women and the UN system

The establishment of the UN Trust Fund as a system-wide fund reflects the intention of UN Member States to pursue concerted efforts to activate and resource key stakeholders in achieving the common goal of ending VAW/G. In December 2020, the intention to accelerate progress across the UN Development System was reiterated in the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the UN system.⁹

The UN Trust Fund’s Global and Regional PACs represent an institutional entry point for strengthening the coordination of efforts to end VAW/G across the UN system and with civil society partners. In this Strategic Plan cycle, the UN Trust Fund will aim to build upon the PACs’ role in grant-selection and strategic planning to motivate partners to engage in joint advocacy and uptake of evidence and practice-based knowledge from CSOs, as codified across the portfolio of its grantees.

The UN Trust Fund’s inter-agency position in the UN system, the role of UN Women as its administrator and the strategic engagement of the UN Trust Fund PACs and UN Women Country and Regional Offices are all critical facets to the achievement of the Strategic Plan 2021-2025.

The UN Trust Fund’s Theory of Action for this Strategic Plan is driven by – and in turn contributes to – key UN inter-agency initiatives and UN Joint Programmes and UN Women’s work on ending VAW/G.¹⁰

The UN Trust Fund builds upon, aligns with and actively promotes UN Women's strategic focus areas on ending VAW/G, namely:



(a) global norms and standards, laws and policies;



(b) the UN Joint Global Programme on Essential Services, to improve the quality of, and access to, comprehensive essential services for survivors of violence;



(c) the UN Joint Framework to underpin action to prevent VAW/G;



(d) research and data, including a Joint Programme with the World Health Organization (WHO) on measuring VAW/G;



(e) UN Women's Global Initiative, Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls.

These initiatives are all based on the principles of human rights, gender equality, “leaving no one behind” of the Agenda 2030, and putting women at the centre, securing their rights, safety, and dignity. Each initiative plays an important role in addressing the rise in VAW/G witnessed during the COVID-19 crisis and will continue to be significant in addressing and preventing VAW/G following the crisis – ensuring continued delivery of essential services, working to mitigate increased violence through prevention activities and supporting women's organizations to continue, adapt and scale-up their services as first responders in this crisis.

The UN Trust Fund's three thematic areas (1. Services, 2. Prevention, 3. Implementation of laws and policies) closely relate to UN Women's strategic focus on ending VAW/G and are refined to reflect the unique positioning of the UN Trust Fund in contributing to achieving these through the efforts of autonomous CSOs/WROs who pursue contextually relevant, demand-driven initiatives under the umbrella of these thematic areas. This approach ensures synergies and complementarity in activation points, complementing UN Women's normative mandate and work to end VAW/G with duty bearers, including national and local governments and community mechanisms. Thus, the UN Trust Fund plays a key role in enabling a ground-up approach to transformative change by supporting community-based, local CSOs/WROs who constitute the driving force of social movements.

1.3. About the Strategic Plan 2021-2025

The UN Trust Fund's Strategic Plan provides a framework to guide the organization's work over a five-year cycle. It sets out priorities based on lessons learned during the previous Strategic Plan period and analysis of the current context and emerging issues, as identified and validated by the PAC and other key stakeholders through a consultation process. The UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2021-2025 aligns with and directly contributes to UN Women's current Strategic Plan (2018-2021)¹¹ and Theory of Change (Outcome 4).¹² It is also aligned to the UN Women's Strategic Plan (2022-2025), currently under development.

Accompanied by a Results Framework that translates the plan into measurable results, this Strategic Plan will enable the UN Trust Fund and stakeholders to monitor achievements, learn lessons, document knowledge and hold the institution accountable for the funds entrusted to it. The Strategic Plan and its intended results are *aspirational* and subject to resourcing and institutional enablement. It is intended to be operationalized in a phased manner over the next five years within the operational framework of UN Women and in partnership with others.

The Strategic Plan 2021-2025 follows the following structure. Chapter 2 situates the UN Trust Fund in the current context and emerging trends, risks and opportunities in the field of ending VAW/G, including the impact of COVID-19. Chapter 3 explores the lessons learned from the last Strategic Plan, based on evidence and consultation feedback. Chapter 4 describes the values and principles of the UN Trust Fund, which underpin the strategic direction for 2021-2025 set out in Chapter 5. Operationalization of the Strategic Plan in the framework of UN Women and the UN system's broader work on ending VAW/G is covered in Chapter 6. And the final chapter focuses on monitoring, evaluation and reporting during the Strategic Plan period.

1.4. Achievements under the Strategic Plan 2016-2020

The results of the UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2016-2020 have been thoroughly documented through annual reports, monitoring against the Results Framework and Reports to the Commission on the Status of Women.¹³ The previous Strategic Plan – which aimed to “fund innovative and impact-orientated programmes, generate knowledge and to support evidence-based programming and mobilize financial support” for efforts to prevent and end VAW/G – is currently undergoing a final evaluation, due to be published at the end of 2021. However, an external Mid Term Review of the Strategic Plan (2019), conducted by an independent consultant, concluded that the UN Trust Fund was on track to achieve or exceed the targets set.

Results have been achieved across the three priority outcome areas of: (1) improved access for women and girls to essential, safe and adequate multisectoral services; (2) improved prevention of VAW/G through changes in behaviours, practices and attitudes; and (3) increased effectiveness of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability systems.

An External Meta-Analysis of findings from 30 external evaluations of projects supported by the UN Trust Fund concluded that “almost half the projects in the sample reported some impact and observed reductions in VAW/G” and that “data from UN Trust Fund projects constitute a valuable resource both for those interested in advancing knowledge in the field of EVAWG [ending violence against women and girls] and for practitioners to learn from other hands-on experiences”.¹⁴

At the very end of the last Strategic Plan cycle, the UN Trust Fund launched its 24th annual Call for Proposals focused



Doung Sokha, a woman with a disability, receives an emergency food kit as well as a COVID-19 hygiene kit from ADD International. Credit: Sambath Rachna/ADD International

on the intersection of VAW/G and the impact of COVID-19. It received 1,498 applications from CSOs/WROs in over 70 countries globally. The UN Trust Fund also carries forward a portfolio of 120 grantees, including those funded under three thematic areas of funding and the general (non-thematic) window, as follows:

- ending violence against refugee and internally displaced women and girls in humanitarian contexts (13 grantees or 11 per cent of the portfolio);
- women and girls living with disabilities (21 grantees or 17.5 per cent of the portfolio)
- the European Union and United Nations Spotlight Initiative (EU/UN Spotlight Initiative) focused on support for women's movements (35 grantees or 29 per cent of the portfolio)
- general window (51 grantees or 42.5 of the portfolio).

Results of the UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2016-2020 at glance

Between

2016 AND 2020

inclusive (five years), UN Trust Fund grantees reached at least:

**54.6
MILLION PEOPLE**



Including women and girls, men and boys as direct beneficiaries, agents of change, duty bearers, rights holders or project participants or recipients of outreach activities.

Among them were at least

**1.6 MILLION
WOMEN AND GIRLS**

who benefited directly through services, empowerment activities and protection from violence

INCLUDING APPROXIMATELY

**150,000
SURVIVORS
OF VIOLENCE.**



BY 2020

90 PER CENT

of the CSOs funded were self-identified as women-led

THE UN TRUST FUND...

>> increased both the number of GRANTS AWARDED and the OVERALL AMOUNT provided compared to the previous Strategic Plan period:

2010 - 2015



109 grants awarded with a total value of
USD54.5 MILLION

33 PER CENT
of grants awarded to WROs

22 PER CENT
The total share of small grants¹⁵
awarded to CSOs

2016 - 2020



146 grants awarded with a total value of
USD67.2 MILLION

64 PER CENT
of grants awarded to WROs

34 PER CENT
The total share of small grants
awarded to CSO

>> established two thematic funding windows to address the needs of specific groups: women and girls living with disabilities, and refugee and internally displaced women and girls in humanitarian contexts.

>> supported grantees to manage gender-responsive, final, external project evaluations: over

100
EVALUATIONS

are now published on the UN Trust Fund's Evaluation Library.¹⁶

>> exceeded its grant-giving targets set in the previous strategic cycle (although it should be noted this remains at around

2-4 PER CENT

of total amount requested in grant applications received each year).



Right: A participant at the UN Trust Fund's Grantee Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019.

Credit: Sulejman Omerbasic/UN Trust Fund,

Left: A participant with International Alert's project in Tajikistan. Credit: International Alert

2 CONTEXT

2.1. Violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls is a grave human rights violation, with immediate and long-term physical, sexual and mental consequences that can be devastating, indeed fatal. It negatively affects women's general well-being and prevents them from fully participating in society. As many as 852 million women and girls over the age of 14 in 2018 (almost one in three) experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.¹⁷ Estimates such as this confirm that physical and sexual intimate partner violence and sexual violence more broadly remain pervasive in the lives of women and adolescent girls across the globe. Some national studies show that up to 70 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner.¹⁸

Although at least 158 countries have legislation specifically addressing domestic violence,¹⁹ challenges remain in enforcing these laws. Less than 40 per cent of women seek help of any sort after experiencing violence and less than 10 per cent go to the police.²⁰ Several factors contribute to underreporting, including the stigma associated with VAW/G, fear of repercussions, the unavailability or prohibitive cost of services and a lack of knowledge about how and where to access support.²¹ Women and girls are more likely to seek support from local, women-run specialist services, based on feminist principles of trusting and empowering survivors.²² Many women still lack access to free or affordable essential services to ensure their safety, protection and recovery in sectors such as health, the police, the justice system and social support.

The impact of violence against the most marginalized women and girls and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination is severe. For example, a study in the Latin America and Caribbean region found that girls and young women living with disabilities experience up to 4.5 times more violence than those without disabilities.²³ In humanitarian and emergency settings, risks to women of different forms of violence increase. A recent WHO study in South Sudan found that abuse by husbands or partners was the most common form of

violence reported, with more than half of the women surveyed (who had ever had an intimate partner) reporting physical and/or sexual domestic violence.²⁴ In order to deliver on the 2030 SDG Agenda and the promise “to leave no one behind”, eliminating violence against women must be grounded in an understanding of VAW/G as intersectional with other forms of inequality.²⁵

Violence against women is defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article 1. In line with the Declaration and its own work, and for the purpose of this Strategic Plan, the UN Trust Fund includes violence against girls in the definition.

The primary responsibility for ensuring the right of women and girls to live a life free from violence and for implementing agreed commitments lies with States. This obligation is grounded in international human rights and humanitarian law, agreed norms and standard-setting instruments at the global, regional and national levels. The UN Secretary-General’s 2020

Leave no one behind “is the central, transformative promise” of the SDGs.

“It represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole... Many of the barriers people face in accessing services, resources and equal opportunities are not simply accidents of fate or a lack of availability of resources, but rather the result of discriminatory laws, policies and social practices that leave particular groups of people further and further behind.”²⁶

“An intersectional approach to violence against women and girls [VAWG] includes a consideration of where gender intersects with other inequalities/oppressions (sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, indigeneity, immigration status, disability) to produce unique experiences of violence. By understanding the different ways in which violence is perpetrated and experienced, an intersectional praxis can design and develop appropriate context-specific responses when addressing VAWG.”²⁷



Participants working on distributing COVID-19 relief items.
Credit: IDIWA, Uganda

global review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action concluded that overall, while States have prioritized violence against women and girls, efforts have been characterized by “piecemeal and incremental approaches” rather than “transformative policies and systemic change”.²⁸ Not enough is being done to prevent violence, which is the most challenging but also the most effective way to eliminate violence sustainably.²⁹

Despite these challenges, there is evidence that VAW/G is preventable and there are tools to support its prevention.

A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls, commissioned by the Government of the United Kingdom under the What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls Global Programme, found that: **“we can prevent VAWG through a range of interventions, within programmatic timeframes”**.³⁰ Although evidence remains lacking in low-resource settings, the WHO has found that the most effective prevention interventions are those that seek to transform harmful gender and social norms through community mobilization and group-based participatory education involving women and men to generate critical reflections about unequal gender and power relationships.³¹

At the global level, a RESPECT Preventing Violence against Women implementation package³² with practical resources

and tools was launched to support implementation of the RESPECT Framework by the WHO with UN Women in 2019 and endorsed by 12 other UN agencies and bilateral partners. This distils programming knowledge and guidance based on existing global evidence, expert recommendations and practitioner consensus. It is intended to support policymakers and practitioners to develop evidence-based, ethical, and effective prevention of VAW/G programming.

.....
“Social Movements” can be defined as an organized set of constituents pursuing a common political agenda of change through collective action.

“Feminist/Women’s Movements” can be described as social movements with certain feminist/gendered characteristics... their agenda is built from a gendered analysis of the problem, or situation they are confronting or seeking to change. Women form a critical mass of the movement’s membership or constituency and the women are the subjects, not objects or targets, of the movement.

Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), Changing their World: Concepts and Practices of Women’s Movements (2012).

2.2. The role of civil society and women's organizations in ending violence against women and girls

Community-based interventions, including those that form part of multi-stakeholder partnerships to end VAW/G, rely on CSOs/WROs. The UN Secretary-General's Beijing Platform review (2020) recognized CSOs, and especially WROs, as key actors in advancing gender equality and called on Member States to support this role.³³ This recognition builds on existing international commitments, including the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) which commits parties to fully fund, recognize and support relevant CSOs active in efforts to end VAW/G.³⁴ Specialist support services³⁵ offered by CSOs and WROs play a critical role in providing women and girls in all their diversity with access to safe and survivor-centred services. Such services include SOS helplines, shelters, rape crisis centres, trauma counselling based on feminist principles. Specialist services offer essential entry points to support and empowerment for survivors, often filling in the gap of general service provision. They also complement general service provision situated in sectors such as health care, social protection, law enforcement and the judiciary.

There is now growing evidence that the strength of WROs – and women's/feminist movements as a whole – is a key factor in driving positive change to end VAW/G.³⁶ In fact, it is thanks to the women's movement and women's rights advocates that VAW/G was recognized as a human rights violation in the early 1990s in the build-up to the Vienna and the Beijing Declarations. A population-level study of violence reduction over 20 years in Nicaragua found that women's advocacy groups can change social norms and lead to reforms that help reduce violence.

WROs and the women's movement are increasingly being recognized as key EAW/G enablers by the UN and partners.³⁷ According to the WHO and the UN Women RESPECT package, *"...women's rights organisations create spaces for collective action by women to advocate for social change which is locally owned and accountable to women. They have campaigned for changes in legislation and research shows that policy and advocacy by feminist movements – and the women's rights organisations that drive them – has been the most important factor in improvements to national legal and policy frameworks to end all forms of violence against women"*.³⁸

Despite these calls to action, funding for WROs remains devastatingly low. The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) estimates that only 1 per cent of gender equality funding is going to WROs.³⁹ In a report produced with Mama Cash,⁴⁰ AWID estimated that between 2017 and 2019 USD1 billion in bilateral and multilateral resourcing for gender equality did not reach feminist movements. Funding for specific groups working with marginalized groups and those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination – such as people with disabilities – is also extremely low,⁴¹ increasing the challenge of ensuring that EAW/G interventions meet their needs.

A significant backlash against women's rights and the rise of "anti-gender movements" is also being observed. The UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women has called for action on the endemic and widespread nature of VAW/G, its power base and the normalization and tolerance of such violence in all areas of public and private life.⁴² Shrinking spaces for CSOs/WROs and the rise in violence against women and human rights defenders were also noted even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.3. The impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 not only exposed the lack of preparedness of countries to respond to and deal with existing, ongoing and persistent VAW/G, it also led to a significant rise of this already prevalent human rights violation.

Across the world, CSOs reported a surge in VAW/G, reflected in increased calls for support to helplines,⁴³ in some cases up by 770 per cent.⁴⁴ An early impact assessment of COVID-19 among UN Trust Fund grantees in April⁴⁵ revealed soaring rates of violence against women and girls globally, confirmed by a second analysis published in September 2020.⁴⁶ This rise in violence has taken many forms and for certain populations, like refugees and migrants, who are not reached

Religious and traditional leaders gather to support the work of the project in Cameroon to prevent and end violence against women and girls. Credit: African Indigenous Women Organization Central African Network



by government schemes, the challenges are even greater. UN Trust Fund partners have reported an increase in resorting to negative coping mechanisms like early and forced marriage. The impacts are both extensive and long term.

The measures adopted to address the pandemic make it harder, if not impossible, for many CSOs, and especially small, women-led organizations, to continue their essential work. The crisis exposed the persistence of harmful social norms, inequities and a multiplicity of intersecting oppressions and forms of marginalization, which makes any progress on ending VAW/G fragile. It has also highlighted the urgent need to continuously resource CSOs and WROs, who provide essential support services for women survivors of violence and lead the critical work to prevent VAW/G.

In April 2020, the UN Secretary-General urged all Governments to make VAW/G prevention and redress a key part of their national response plans for COVID-19;⁴⁷ 146 Member States responded to his call to action.⁴⁸ The UN system came together to accelerate policy responses to gender-based violence in the context of COVID-19.⁴⁹ Six critical areas for action were identified, among which was **increased funding from national and international aid budgets for WROs, who are first responders during this and every crisis, including through such mechanisms as the UN Trust Fund, which is committed to supporting CSOs and WROs through the crisis. In 2020, the UN Secretary-General also launched a gender-based violence political engagement strategy (“Fund, Prevent, Respond, Collect”) which is a joint platform for the entire UN system and in particular urges States to prioritize funding for essential services and to increase flexible funding for WROs.**

“No human rights scourge is more prevalent than gender inequality. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated entrenched discrimination against women and girls. The crisis has a woman’s face... Violence against women and girls in all forms has skyrocketed, from online abuse to domestic violence, trafficking, sexual exploitation and child marriage... At the same time, the COVID-19 response has highlighted the power and effectiveness of women’s leadership.”⁵⁰

UN Secretary-General’s Message to the Opening of the 46th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 22 February 2021.

“In April this year, I urged the international community to work to end the shadow pandemic of gender-based violence once and for all. I reiterate and relaunch that appeal today. The global community needs to hear the voices and experiences of women and girls and take into account their needs, especially survivors and those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. We must also prioritize women’s leadership in finding solutions and engage men in the struggle. Action must involve predictable and flexible funding for women’s rights organizations, who so often act as first responders during crises. It is critical that services for survivors of violence remain open, with adequate resources and measures in place to support health, social and justice responses.”

Message from UN Secretary-General António Guterres on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25th November 2020.

2.4. Emerging global trends impacting on violence against women and girls

During the consultation process on the new Strategic Plan, UN Trust Fund stakeholders raised a number of significant global trends, pre-dating the COVID-19 pandemic, which have an impact on gender equality, VAW/G and the women’s movement.

Demographic trends show that the world’s population continues to grow, although at a significantly reduced rate.⁵¹ However, declining fertility rates are not a uniform trend; for example, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean still experience high levels of teenage pregnancy (at 104 and 63 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 in 2019 respectively).⁵²

As the population continues to grow the **generation of young women entering their reproductive years in the next decade will be larger than ever**, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), where the number of women aged 15-49 will grow by 52 per cent and 32 per cent respectively by 2050.⁵³ Declining fertility and lower rates of mortality at all ages also mean that **populations are ageing**, presenting challenges for social protection systems,

and **women are significantly over-represented among older age groups.**

Urbanization continues apace. By 2030 it is projected that 60 per cent of the world’s population will live in urban rather than rural settings.⁵⁴ While **poverty tends to be higher in rural areas** (roughly two out of three people in extreme poverty live in rural settings),⁵⁵ **inequality tends to be higher in urban areas.** Both poverty and inequality are causes and drivers of VAW/G. **Women are over-represented among those living in urban slums** in 80 per cent of the 59 developing countries for which data are available.⁵⁶

Although **migration flows** have declined during the pandemic, they remain a significant global trend. In 2019, there were a total of 272 million international migrants (3.5 per cent of the world’s population), including 26 million refugees.⁵⁷

Women and girls make up almost half of all international migrants. In recent years there has been a rise in the number of women from poorer countries migrating to fill jobs in the domestic and care sectors in wealthier countries.⁵⁸ Many find themselves in low paid and insecure jobs where they are at risk of exploitation and abuse. The sharp drop in transnational movement in 2020 will also have knock-on consequences for women; the World Bank predicts that the flow of remittances from migrants to their families and communities will decline.⁵⁹

Conflict and displacement have led to rising numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers. It is estimated that 235 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in 2021, including 51 million internally displaced people, about half of them women and girls, while the global number of refugees has doubled to 20 million.⁶⁰ Conflict and crises can also lead to higher prevalence of VAW/G, including sexual violence; conservative estimates indicate that at least one in five displaced or refugee women has experienced sexual violence.⁶¹

Climate-related disasters are also leading to massive displacement, affecting an estimated at 25 million people worldwide in 2019.⁶² In the last three decades, **land degradation, biodiversity loss, global warming and pollution** have rapidly accelerated and intensified into widespread and interlinked environmental and climate crises.⁶³ This is amplifying existing gender inequalities⁶⁴ as women tend to have unequal participation in decision-making and unequal access to environmental assets and natural resources.

Calls for fiscal austerity risk having severe negative effects on women and girls, given their greater reliance on public services (including essential services in response to violence), their role as default care providers when services are eroded and their strong presence as front-line public sector workers. **Rates of Official Development Assistance (ODA) are also**

By the end of 2020,
13 PER CENT
of the world's women and girls
– 469 MILLION PEOPLE –
were living in
extreme poverty
(an increase from
11% in 2019)⁶⁵



Women's employment and incomes have been hit particularly hard by the **deep recession**⁶⁶ sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic, threatening to erase the limited progress in this area over the past two decades.⁶⁷

stagnant or in decline and funding for gender equality as a primary objective has stalled.

This comes at a time when some countries were already experiencing a backlash on gender equality as well as **virulent opposition to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) rights**.⁶⁸ There is evidence that **political violence and hate speech targeting women** is increasing in many contexts.⁶⁹ Increasing social and political polarization and deepening inequality globally have resulted in **human rights defenders, WROs and feminist groups being targeted and women of colour experiencing disproportionate levels of violence**.⁷⁰ Online, gender-based abuse, cyberbullying and sexual harassment against women and girls, especially those active in public life, are increasingly common.

Despite these challenges, across the world, women of all ages are leading movements for change on issues ranging from democracy to economic, climate and racial justice. They are demanding a range of rights, including the right to education, sexual and reproductive rights, migrant and refugee rights,

indigenous rights and LGBTI rights. The #MeToo movement, Black Lives Matter and other social and justice movements were cited by several stakeholders in the consultation process as movements that share values and vision with the work on ending VAW/G and have crossed national boundaries.⁷¹

Over the last decade new forms of organizing for social justice have emerged, characterized by the use of social media and the internet. **Digital feminism** has experienced a significant explosion,⁷² not least in the field of ending VAW/G. However, this also raises issues around the **digital divide**⁷³ and lack of internet access in some regions which need to be addressed in order to mobilize for change and support women and girls.

2.5. Partners working on ending violence against women and girls

Despite this shrinking space, partnerships and collective action to end VAW/G continue to strive for change. These efforts have been instigated by, among others: national governments and authorities; bilateral and multilateral organizations; women's funds; philanthropic organizations; NGOs, CSOs and WROs; and individual activists. In 2018, the launch of the joint EU/UN Spotlight Initiative to end VAW/G provided EUR500 million across five regions for EAW/G programming.⁷⁴

There has been a rise in **young feminist organizing** in part as a result of convening and mentoring by feminist organizations and in part in response to, among other things, frustrations with traditional forms of NGO organizing.⁷⁵ These initiatives are able to operate fluidly across movements and intersectional issues and to represent and engage in diverse social movements and expressions of feminism. A significant proportion of youth activists are not part of legally registered organizations in their countries of origin, either by choice or necessity.⁷⁶

Local and global WROs, feminist movements and women's funds as well as CSOs dedicated to gender equality and ending VAW/G have been working for decades on the issue and continue to do so. Women's funds such as Mama Cash, the Africa Women's Development Fund and the Global Fund for Women have been amplifying the voice of WROs and calling on funders to provide more overseas development assistance directly to feminist movements, especially in the Global South. Women's funds and NGOs have also called on the EAW/G community to increase the participation of women's organizations, researchers, activists and programme developers **based in the Global South** in advancing evidence-based work on EAW/G prevention grounded in feminist principles.



Fundación Andhes (Abogados y abogadas del Noroeste argentino en Derechos Humanos y estudios sociales) participated in the march “Ni Una Menos” against gender-based violence in Argentina. Photo: Fernanda Rotondo/Fundación Andhes.

Practice-based learning is “The cumulative knowledge acquired from designing and implementing ideas and methodologies over a sustained timeframe, including insights gained from observation, direct experiences, and program monitoring.”

Raising Voices (2019)

The African Women’s Development Fund and Raising Voices, among others, have called for more investment in the Global South to build the EVAW/G evidence base through local ownership of research and programming, with a focus on practice-based learning.

The EU/UN Spotlight Initiative has allocated an entire outcome and line of funding to WROs.⁷⁷ Its collaboration with the UN Trust Fund focuses on CSO initiatives in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on WROs. Open dialogue continues⁷⁸ between civil society and intergovernmental organizations on expanding the accessibility of the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative and other available funding⁷⁹ for WROs to capitalize on their expertise and practice-based knowledge on ending VAW/G.

In this context, the UN Trust Fund is best positioned to support direct resourcing of CSOs/WROs and feminist organizing, including young feminists, while coordinating with the UN partners and ensuring that the lessons from practitioners are informing the policies, programmes and funding decisions of the UN, multilateral intergovernmental institutions and Member States. The UN Trust Fund’s wide outreach, illustrated by a consistent annual demand of almost 2,000 applications from CSOs, allows it to identify new partners for the UN system, support and elevate their expertise and have them recognized as reliable partners for others in the EVAW/G ecosystem.



Right: A participant in Equality for Growth's project working to end violence for market traders in Tanzania. Credit: Gemma Wood/UN Trust Fund

Left: A participant with International Alert in Tajikistan working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Credit: Aziz Sattori/International Alert

LESSONS LEARNED APPLIED TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

This chapter describes lessons learned by the UN Trust Fund and how these inform the new Strategic Plan.

The UN Trust Fund is committed to continuous learning that feeds back into and informs its own policies and procedures. This learning is rooted in evidence generated by periodic, independent and external assessments, donor assessments/reviews, annual grantee surveys and independent final evaluations of projects. The following lessons are extracted from this wealth of documented learning and triangulated with feedback received from stakeholders involved in the new Strategic Plan consultation process. This includes lessons collected at the UN Trust Fund's 2019 Grantee Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina attended by over 100 stakeholders.⁸⁰

The impact of COVID-19 on VAW/G has generated one of the most significant recent lessons. As the pandemic-related global crisis evolved, the UN Trust Fund has employed its human and financial resources to **promptly adapt and respond to the rapidly changing circumstances**. This has required receptiveness, flexibility, and a strong relationship with grantees including a thorough understanding of their and their beneficiaries' changing needs.

The UN Trust Fund's Five-Point Action Plan,⁸¹ issued as an immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis, was rooted in data collected from CSOs/WROs and set out immediate, medium and long-term response measures. These included providing additional resources to current grantees to support organizational resilience and survival and launching a new Call for Proposals to fund projects tackling the intersection of VAW/G and COVID-19. The UN Trust Fund's response built on established grant-giving practices and relationships of trust with partners and, therefore, specific lessons drawn from COVID-19 experiences are not detailed separately but rather interwoven into the list of lessons below.

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The Strategic Plan consultation process: As part of the strategic planning process, the UN Trust Fund consulted with over 100 internal and external individual partners through focus group sessions and key informant interviews over a six-month period in 2020 and 2021. Stakeholders included current and former grantees (CSOs, DPOs, WROs); experts and academics in the EAW/G field; partners at women's funds and NGOs; UN Member States; donors; UN partners; and UN Women staff.

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3.1. The UN Trust Fund is the key UN system mechanism for grant-giving to civil society and women's organizations working to end violence against women and girls

In March 2020, in the context of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN Secretary-General called on Member States to support the UN Trust Fund and the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund.⁸² The UN Trust Fund is referenced in the UN's Framework for the Socio-Economic response to COVID-19 as **a key mechanism to fund civil society**, working to "amplify women's voices in the social dialogue on the socio-economic impact of COVID 19."⁸³ It has also been a vehicle for activating the UN Secretary-General's Political Engagement Strategy on ending VAW/G during the pandemic through its networks as well as its ability to provide a platform for dialogue between Member States, the UN system and CSOs.⁸⁴ Such discussions have been reflected in a series of knowledge briefs which will continue to be issued in 2021.⁸⁵

The UN Trust Fund's role as a mechanism to channel resources to demand-driven CSO/WRO efforts has also been recognized by the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative, which provided USD9 million for additional funding to existing grantees in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020, with a primary focus on support for their institutional strengthening, risk mitigation and recovery in the context COVID-19.

The 2019 Mid Term Review of the UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2016-2020 by an independent consultant found that there was scope for the UN Women and the UN system to explore further the UN Trust Fund's potential as an inter-agency mechanism able to inform and contribute to the EAW/G ecosystem. It concluded that internal and external

advocacy and communications about the role of the UN Trust Fund should increase. A key lesson integrated in this Strategic Plan is the need for further strengthening **collaboration, joint advocacy, collective action and partnership** with key stakeholders, including the UN system, women's funds and organizations, as well as UN Member States, while building collaboratively and in coordination with other UN Women's funds and EAW/G initiatives.

3.2. Support to civil society and women's organizations in the context of women's/feminist movements is essential yet under resourced

There was a strong consensus among stakeholders, donors and grantees that one of the main values of the UN Trust Fund is its focus **on women-led WROs and CSOs** in the Global South. This focus fills a gap in the sector by providing these autonomous organizations with resources, capacity development and access to a wide network of partners. The UN Trust Fund's grant-giving experience debunks the long-standing myth that WROs cannot manage larger pots of funding.⁸⁶ The Mid Term Review⁸⁷ concluded that the UN Trust Fund should continue to capitalize on this unique niche in the funding of the EAW/G ecosystem and strengthen its identity as the only UN inter-agency mechanism with this particular focus and expertise. This approach recognizes the due diligence of duty bearers to ensure women and girls live lives free of violence and highlights the key role CSOs/WROs have in a support and protection system. It aims to elevate their contribution and advocate for the formal recognition of the essential role of CSOs/WROs in preventing and ending VAW/G.

The UN Trust Fund's model of funding has been highlighted as a good example by AWID, which notes a "willingness to make changes to their modalities (e.g. adjusting eligibility requirements, grant sizes, dedicated funding windows) over time as they learned about both what was working, and not working, to reach feminist organisations".⁸⁸

In the global funding landscape, as a result of long-term feminist advocacy by activists over decades, there is recognition of the key **role of autochthonous and autonomous social movements** – especially women's and feminist movements – in driving the EVAW/G transformative change agenda. This is reflected, for example, in the feminist foreign policy of the Government of Sweden⁸⁹ and the feminist international assistance policy of the Government of Canada.⁹⁰ It is also the approach adopted by the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative in its focus on funding “women's rights groups, autonomous social movements and CSOs, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/marginalization, more effectively influence and advance progress on GEWE [gender equality and women's empowerment] and ending VAWG.”⁹¹

The UN Trust Fund currently has a portfolio of 55 grantees within the scope of the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative and is collecting evidence on the most effective modalities to support CSOs, especially WROs and women-led organizations in the context of women's and feminist movements, as essential to EVAW/G efforts. The aim is to inform continual and increased resourcing.

3.3. Long-term funding for programming to end violence against women and girls is key to achieving impact and transformative change

The amount and quality of funding to CSOs and WROs⁹² has consistently been flagged as a major concern in consultations. Stakeholders consulted attributed this mainly to austerity measures, historical trends in funding for EVAW/G efforts and the fact that some donors are pulling back from EVAW/G programming. It was also noted that some donors request reporting on the immediate, short-term impact of their funding. EVAW/G efforts require project sustainability matched with organizational resilience: long-term work and investment are needed to achieve transformative change in the lives of survivors, adequate institutional changes and a shift in dominant social norms that can be sustained over time.

An external Meta-Analysis of 30 external evaluations of projects funded by the UN Trust Fund between 2015 and 2019 concluded that: “UN Trust Fund projects have adopted various effective strategies to shift harmful social norms

related to VAW/G, but some deep-seated norms remain hard to shift within three years”. It recommended that the UN Trust Fund “consider providing funding for longer projects – at least four years, in recognition of the time needed for social norms change”.⁹³

One successful step towards this has been the UN Trust Fund's special “invitation only” funding modality, through which a selection of current and previous grantees were invited to submit a second proposal with the potential for replicating or scaling up their projects, on the basis of rigorous evidence-based results, which would extend the project period to up to six years. While it is too early to assess the full impact of this modality (it will be assessed as part of the final evaluation of the previous Strategic Plan), the External Mid Term Review concluded that the modality has been “well received” by partners. For example, one organization that received a second round of funding was Raising Voices, which was able to adapt and test the successful “SASA!” prevention modality in three more countries, including in humanitarian contexts. This methodology has now been implemented and adapted by 70 organizations in more than 30 countries.⁹⁴

3.4. Flexible and core funding for civil society and women's organizations is critical for organizational resilience

Informed by the experience and advocacy of other women's funds and women's organizations over the years,⁹⁵ the UN Trust Fund introduced two new eligible budget allocations in 2019 for small grants: **core funding**⁹⁶ of up to 7 per cent of the total amount allocated to project activities, and **self-care costs**⁹⁷ for up to USD2,000. This decision, which aligned with the UN Trust Fund's commitment to support small organizations, was a pilot initiative to contribute to their organizational resilience in a more tangible and planned way.

A survey carried out in 2020 among the 37 small organizations who had benefited from these allocations found that these funds had been used to **make both critical and sustainable investments towards their organizational resilience** (including paying for staff training, fundraising or office rent). And 60 per cent of respondents surveyed on the **use of self- and collective care budgets** spent these funds on health care for staff and mental health support, including management of “burn out” activities. In terms of impact, respondents said it **decreased the overall level of stress** and improved workplace relations.

As the impact of COVID-19 emerged, and anticipating the needs of grantees, **the UN Trust Fund also rolled out a “contingency” budget line⁹⁸** and allowed flexibility in adjusting budgets for all grantees. Also in response to the pandemic, the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative provided an additional USD9 million for institutional strengthening and COVID-19 response for all 44 existing UN Trust Fund grantees in sub-Saharan Africa.

The UN Trust Fund continues to play an important role, in partnership with others, in advocating for flexible, adaptative funding and for self and collective care and in gathering evidence on the impact of such funds.

3.5. The three thematic areas for interventions to end violence against women and girls remain relevant

Two external meta-analyses of evaluation findings from UN Trust Fund projects, one in 2016 and the second in 2020,⁹⁹ found that significant results had been achieved under the three outcome areas (see box below). The Meta-Analysis (2020) found that the majority of UN Trust Fund projects in the sample analysed implemented work across two, if not all three of the outcome areas.

In consultations with stakeholders, including key experts in the field, these outcome areas were validated as remaining relevant today. In the context of COVID-19, service provision is ever more important. As the response to the pandemic diverts and overloads general/public services, it is specialist community-based WROs that are mobilizing to meet the increased need for support and assistance from survivors of violence. In an era of increased populism, nationalism and a backlash against women’s rights in some countries, due diligence and work on implementing EVAW/G laws, policies and action plans, including holding duty bearers to account, is rendered even more important. And prevention interventions remain the bedrock of structural transformation of harmful gender norms and practices in order to achieve sustainable impact on ending VAW/G.

In the last Strategic Plan, the UN Trust Fund focused on funding interventions under **three broad outcome areas**:

1



improved access for women and girls to essential, safe and adequate multisectoral services;

2



improved prevention of VAW/G through changes in behaviours, practices and attitudes;

3



increased effectiveness of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability systems.

Results and lessons learned under the outcome areas of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020

1. Expanding access to essential, specialist, safe and adequate multisectoral services

The urgent need for **locally based services** rooted in feminist principles has been particularly evident in relation to groups of women and girls experiencing **intersecting and multiple forms of oppression and discrimination**

including women and girls living with disabilities, those living in poverty in urban and rural areas, internally displaced and refugee women, indigenous women and members of religious or ethnic minorities.



A TOTAL OF
158,736
WOMEN AND GIRLS

directly benefited from essential, specialist services provided by UN Trust Fund grantees between 2017 and 2020.

THE SERVICES PROVIDED MOST FREQUENTLY BY WROS WERE:



LONG-TERM
PSYCHOLOGICAL
COUNSELLING



MEDICAL
CARE



SHELTERS



LEGAL AID



SOS
HELPLINES



2. Preventing violence against women and girls

THE META-ANALYSIS (2020) FOUND THAT **FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF PREVENTION PROJECTS INCLUDE:**

- investing in the skills of front-line/community facilitators and community members;
- engaging men and boys;
- context-tailored interventions;
- survivor-centred project design;
- mid-course project adaptations when barriers to action are identified;
- a gender transformative approach designed from the ground up and with clear objectives for behaviour change.

Many grantees strove to address harmful social norms related to VAW/G, but some deep-seated norms remain hard to shift in a three-year period, which speaks to the importance of accounting for the significant time, skills and intensive community engagement necessary to challenge social norms and strengthen autochthonous social movements.

3. Strengthening the implementation of laws, policies and national action plans

Overall, there is an ongoing need to strengthen the actual implementation of national laws, policies and action plans and to expand the focus to include building political will in relation to specific actions and alignment of national legislative and policy frameworks with international standards.



WHEN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES WITH POLICYMAKERS ARE

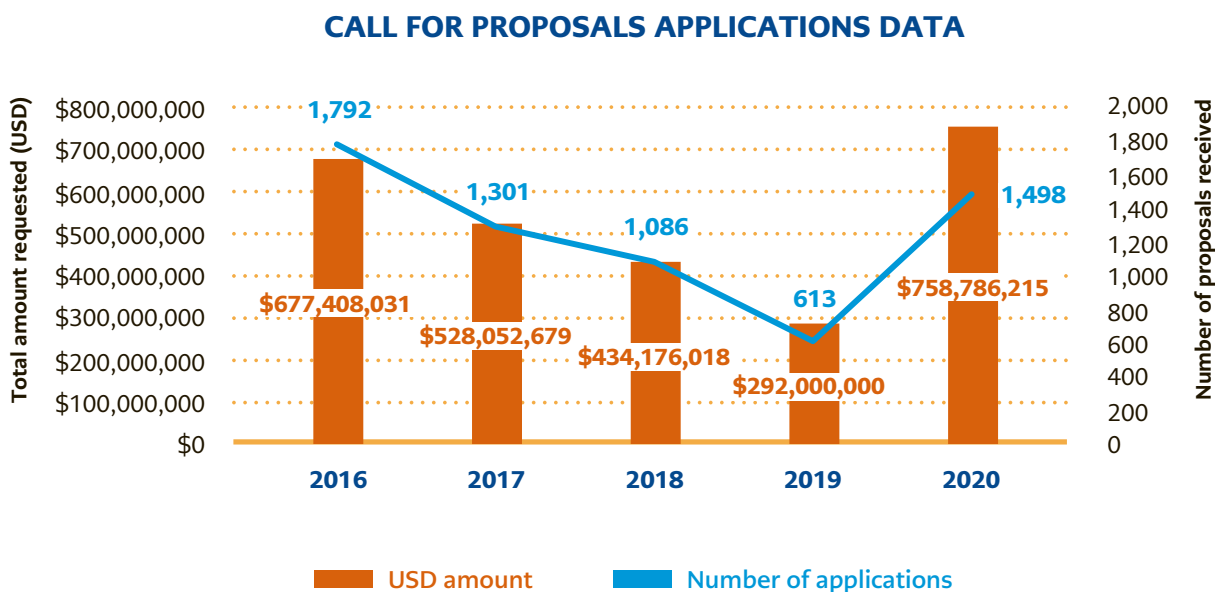
WELL PLANNED AND FOCUSED

projects are more likely to strengthen institutional responses

3.6. Demand-driven, contextually relevant projects are key to sustainable impact, localization and ownership of the agenda to end violence against women and girls

As reported in the independent Meta-Analysis (2020),¹⁰⁰ UN Trust Fund projects are very diverse across a number of metrics – their geographic spread; the range of VAW/G issues covered; settings (for example, health care, legal, educational); the variety of community groups engaged; and the strategies adopted (for example, from offering legal aid to setting up shelters to providing health-care services). This diversity is no doubt due to the demand-driven, competitive nature of the UN Trust Fund’s annual Call for Proposals. This is open to applications from all legally registered NGOs/CSOs globally in ODA recipient countries working at national, subnational and community levels and tackling all forms of VAW/G (as defined in the UN Secretary-General’s 2006 in-depth study).¹⁰¹

The stakeholders consulted validated and supported continuing this approach, emphasizing the importance of funding local CSOs that are close to the communities affected. A demand-driven approach also facilitates identifying and addressing emerging trends in VAW/G, including new forms of violence. Stakeholders in the consultation process recognized this as a key strength of the UN Trust Fund.



Demand-driven grant-giving refers to the UN Trust Fund’s annual Call for Proposals from CSOs for projects that are conceptualized, developed and fully implemented by CSOs and in line with their assessment of the particular needs of their countries and communities. This grant-giving model allows CSOs to apply funding for their own strategies to end VAW/G.

A demand-driven approach is in line with the UN principles of supporting national ownership and in the spirit of the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action commitments on aid effectiveness. It also aligns with the UN Women EVAWG Programming Principle on **employing culturally and contextually relevant entry points** which need to be defined by the CSOs themselves, informed by community and relevant needs assessments.



Launch of project activities in Narok, Kenya. Credit: CREAM, Kenya

3.7. An intersectional approach to ending violence against women and girls is key to delivering on the SDG Agenda and the principle of “leaving no one behind”

The last Strategic Plan recognized the particular needs of certain marginalized women and girls due to intersecting and multiple forms of oppression and discrimination that were exposing them to a heightened risk of VAW/G. “Special funding windows”¹⁰² were the primary modality through which the UN Trust Fund shed light on specific underresourced areas of EVAW/G programming. In 2017 a special funding window was launched that focused on the needs of forcibly displaced women and girls in the context of humanitarian crises. This was followed in 2018 by a funding window on preventing and ending violence against women and girls living with disabilities.

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An intersectional approach derives from the concept of “intersectionality” originally formulated by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) in relation to defining the specific location occupied by women of colour.

An intersectional approach acknowledges perspectives and historical and social contexts and recognizes the unique experience of the individual based on the intersection of all relevant grounds, including recognition of specific forms of discrimination and oppression.

Such an approach actively demands an end to the structural social inequalities and barriers that perpetuate and feed into marginalization in connection to factors such as race, ethnicity, class, socio-economic status, HIV status, sexual orientation and gender identity.

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The Mid Term Review concluded that these modalities encouraged applicants to work on intersectionality and attracted attention and funding to under resourced areas. Stakeholders also reported in consultations that these initiatives have been effective in **bridging the divide between organizations with different areas of expertise and facilitating the development of complementary partnerships, such as those between WROs and disabled persons organizations**. This has enabled organizations to learn from one another and maximize resources to reach more women at risk of exclusion and to do so holistically across their intersecting realities and the specific locations they occupy. However, challenges were also identified, not least the single-issue approach of working through the special window modality.

Beyond the two special windows and across the entire portfolio, the UN Trust Fund has also supported other projects to engage with women and girls at increased risk of violence due to marginalization and intersecting forms of discrimination. For instance, UN Trust Fund grantees worked with women affected by HIV, women migrants, self-identified sex workers, women with diverse sexual and gender identities, adolescent girls and elderly women and those belonging to racial, ethnic or religious minority groups.

In 2021, an external analysis commissioned by the UN Trust Fund found that grantee organizations working with an intersectional approach facilitated the participation of marginalized groups from the design stage and all the way through implementation. It enabled an explicit focus on dismantling the structural barriers that render women in such groups invisible (in communities, policy, discourse, research and programming) while at the same time recognizing and addressing the range of diversity within each group.¹⁰³ The analysis also found that there are important lessons to be learned from grantees on the application of an intersectional lens to EVAW/G programming, which, although championed by feminist organizations, remains relatively under documented.

In summary, the UN Trust Fund, adopted a twin track approach of focusing on specific experiences of intersectional marginalization that were recognized as underfunded at a particular time and also taking steps to mainstream an intersectional approach in the remainder of its portfolio. This has enabled the UN Trust Fund to strike a balance – recognizing that it is often necessary to prioritize certain intersections in a particular time and place, while institutionalizing and mainstreaming an intersectional approach across its portfolio, specifically in the selection of projects and organizations it funds.

3.8. The UN Trust Fund's body of evidence can expand the knowledge base and elevate practice-based learning on ending violence against women and girls

The Mid Term Review concluded that the UN Trust Fund had huge potential to fill gaps in the EVAW/G evidence base and to more systematically inform UN system inter-agency work on VAW/G through this knowledge. This potential is being noticed by other partners and in 2020 the UN Trust Fund was invited to be a member of the Advisory Committee on a Global Research Agenda for VAW/G,¹⁰⁴ led by the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) and the Equality Institute. Likewise, the UN Trust Fund attracted a modest grant from a philanthropic fund in 2020 to consolidate practice-based knowledge on prevention.

The Meta-Analysis (2020) found that UN Trust Fund projects, by virtue of the demand-driven and competitive nature of grant-making, constitute a unique dataset representing a diversity of civil society programmes working to end VAW/G. Taken together, data from the projects constitute a valuable resource both for those interested in advancing knowledge in the field of ending VAW/G and for practitioners. However, the Meta-Analysis concluded that further **investment is critical to expand the scope of the dataset and the types of data, measures and themes in future evaluations, analyses and studies in order to take advantage of the full range and scope of UN Trust Fund projects.**

3.9. The UN Trust Fund's value is in its grant-giving, capacity development, evidence and knowledge, advocacy and convening

During the consultation process to develop this Strategic Plan, stakeholders agreed that the organizational pillars set out in the previous Strategic Plan – (1) Grant-Giving (2) Evidence and (3) Global Giving – remained relevant.

Space for knowledge sharing, learning and cross-grantee dialogue was highlighted as a continuing priority for the grantees consulted. They stressed that knowledge exchange



Girls participating in an empowerment activity. Credit: BNPS Bangladesh

should be inclusive and ensure the participation of CSO staff working in the communities of interventions – the practitioners themselves.

There was also a call for the UN Trust Fund to continue supporting the **visibility of local WROs at the national level and beyond. Donors generally concurred**, but also linked these efforts to **support for the women’s movement in general**. Capacity development and knowledge exchange should enable smaller CSOs/WROs to network and build alliances on ending VAW/G. The UN Trust Fund’s 2019 Grantee Convention was hailed by AWID as a successful model in bringing “feminist activists to the table in regular and meaningful ways [which] creates a feedback loop that will ultimately strengthen any gender programming”.¹⁰⁵

Both donors and grantees encouraged the UN Trust Fund to have more explicit plans for **simplifying the grant application and management process and system**, with a focus on

Capacity development “the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time – is critical to sustaining social, economic and environmental development results. It also maximizes effectiveness, efficiency and country ownership of development by ensuring that national stakeholders can effectively, efficiently and self-sufficiently manage and deliver services to target groups.”

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidance (June 2019).

supporting and reaching smaller WROs. The UN Trust Fund and UN Women have been striving to strike the right balance between meeting this request while also adhering to gold standard programmatic and financial procedures for accountability purposes. This includes a **review of grant-making policies and procedures** with a view to designing grant-giving modalities responsive to the voiced needs of CSOs/WROs.

3.10. The UN Trust Fund is an advocate for funding modalities responsive to civil society and women's rights organizations both inside and outside the UN system

The UN Trust Fund strives to be “more than a donor” and to contribute to improved coordination both inside and outside the UN system. The UN Trust Fund Secretariat invests extensively in internal coordination to ensure the needs of grantees are met while also fulfilling accountability requirements. This positions the UN Trust Fund as an internal advocate within the UN system for the recognition of the needs of CSOs/WROs – **donors repeatedly referenced the position of the UN Trust Fund in the UN system.**

For some donors an inter-agency trust fund – such as the UN Trust Fund – dedicated to a specific goal corresponds well with their expectations of how development cooperation across the UN system should ideally work. However, this potential is not sufficiently exploited, as testified by limited financial resourcing of the UN Trust Fund to meet the demand elicited by its annual Call for Proposals (2-4 per cent of total annual request is funded). Other donors cautioned that the pace of growth must be mirrored by organizational capacity to deliver, avoiding duplication and promoting joint advocacy with the other women's funds. Hence working in partnership and collaboration with others is essential.

Some donors encouraged UN Women to make the most of the UN Trust Fund's full potential as an inter-agency mechanism by positioning it as a mechanism to support harmonization of intersecting work on ending violence and discrimination against women and girls across the UN system. They also encouraged the UN Trust Fund to work more closely with other UN agencies and mechanisms to enhance advocacy and raise its profile.

To conclude, these 10 lessons learned – which emerged from a significant number of independent assessments, reviews and evaluations and have been triangulated with the expert opinions of trusted partners and stakeholders through the consultative process – are the basis for the way forward for the next strategic cycle 2021-2025.



Participants in the UN Trust Fund's Grantee Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019.
Credit: Sulejman Omerbasic/UN Trust Fund

VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

4.1. Overarching programming principles

All UN programming aims to contribute to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, sustainability, resilience and accountability, as reflected in the SDGs and Agenda 2030. This is grounded in the UN Charter and framed by agreed international treaties and norms.

Managed by UN Women on behalf of the UN system, the UN Trust Fund operates under UN values of **respect for diversity, integrity and professionalism**.¹⁰⁶ Its work is guided by the **United Nations Programming Principles** which centre on the clear commitment to **leave no one behind**. In addition, and in the context of a specific focus on ending VAW/G, the UN Trust Fund follows and promotes through its grant-giving **UN Women's**



Programming Principles on ending VAW/G, namely:

- Adopting a human rights-based approach
- Ensuring a survivor-centred and women's empowerment approach
- Operating under ethical guidelines
- Ensuring gender responsiveness and transformative approaches
- Employing culturally and contextually relevant entry points
- Addressing specific forms and settings of VAW/G through a clear understanding of specific contexts
- Adopting an intersectional approach and focusing on groups most at risk of being left behind
- Operating within an socio-ecological model of understanding violence
- Working in partnership with different stakeholders
- Drawing on existing evidence of “what works” (or does not)

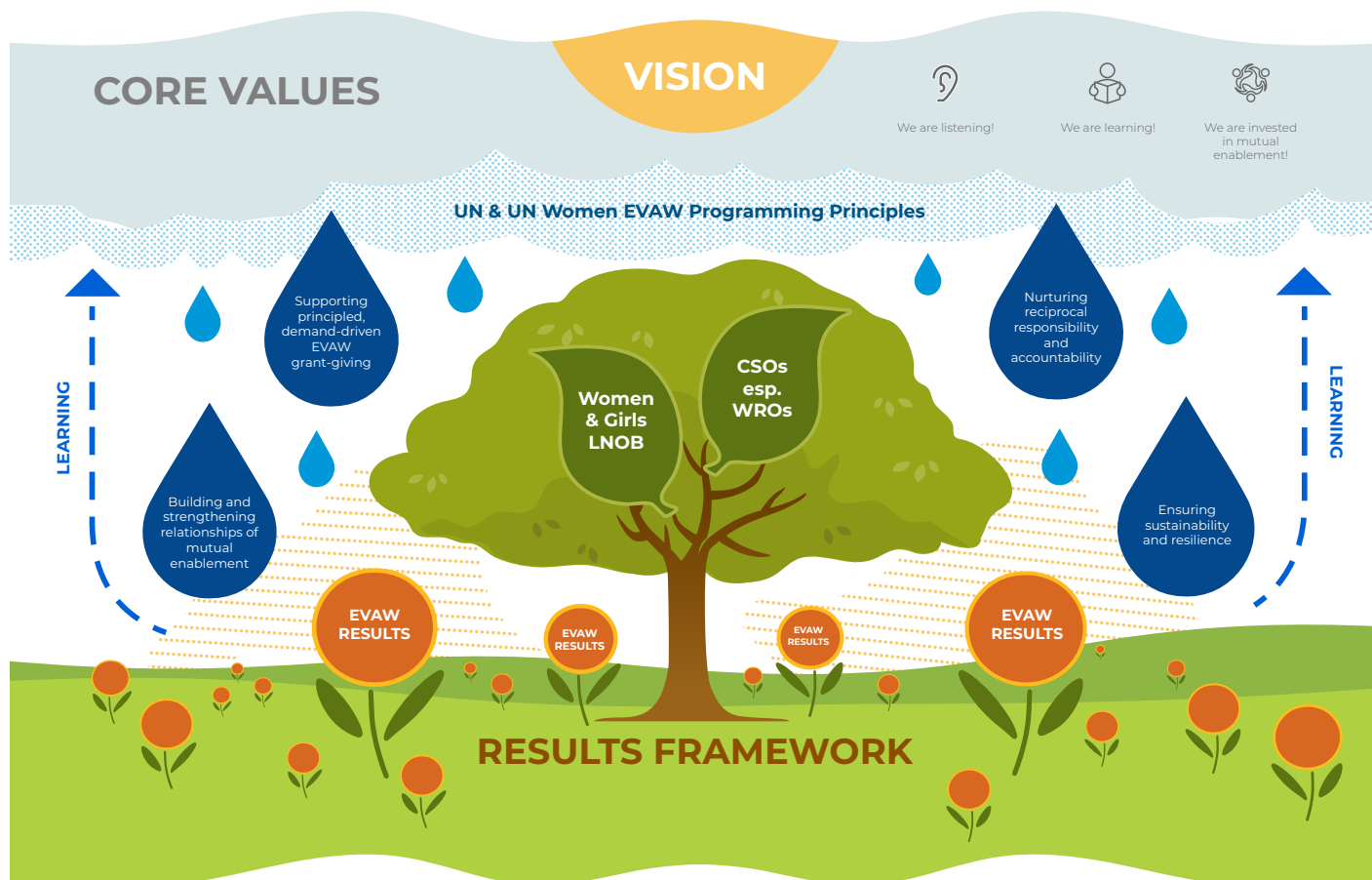
Additionally, in its strategic planning and implementation, the UN Trust Fund applies the UN principles of results-focused

and risk-informed programming, and contributes to the development of national capacities to work on preventing and ending VAW/G.

4.2. Core values

Grounded in feminist principles, the UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2021-2025 Plan is based on the following core values:

- **Our work will continue to be led and informed by women's experiences and civil society efforts to end VAW/G**, fully recognizing:
 - » Women's and survivors' agency and self-affirmation.
 - » Multi-layered, intersecting identities across the broadly heterogeneous social group defined as **women** and therefore assigning high value to ongoing interactions and engagement with multiple stakeholders in order to recognize the diversity of perspectives.



- **The expertise and knowledge generated by CSOs/WROs will continue to guide our work.**
 - » CSOs, especially WROs, are holders of key insights on contextually relevant approaches. They create pathways for women's and girls' empowerment, visibility, shifts in power and the redistribution of resources within the context in which they operate.
 - » The UN Trust Fund recognizes the expertise of its civil society partners, which will be the foundation of its commitment to elevate practitioner-based knowledge and evidence to inform global agenda setting to end VAW/G.
 - » This Strategic Plan will seek to inform, broaden and deepen knowledge and lessons about VAW/G across sectors and in a spirit of shared goals.
- **Mutually enabling relationships with our stakeholders is central to who we are and how we work.**
 - » We build relationships of mutual enablement with all our partners and stakeholders.
 - » We use our convening potential to nurture horizontal and enriching exchanges as a core engine for broadening the existing UN Trust Fund community.
 - » We will continue to amplify jointly agreed messages in pursuit of collective action for change for the benefit of all women and girls, especially survivors and those at heightened risk of violence.

4.3. Grant-making principles

Four interrelated and interconnected principles will support our grant-giving decisions, aiming to empower women and girls through enabling CSOs, especially WROs, to deliver survivor-centred and demand-driven initiatives and to support their programmes to achieve sustainable impact on ending VAW/G.

1. Supporting principled and demand-driven grant-giving to end VAW/G

The UN Trust Fund will support initiatives adhering to *UN Women's Programming Principles on ending VAW/G*. Considering that gender is a social construct¹⁰⁷ dependent and formed by a combination of factors, such as social and cultural norms, and profoundly determined by context, the UN Trust Fund will support *demand-driven and contextually relevant initiatives*. It will aim to accelerate and resource autochthonous and autonomous civil society efforts to prevent and end VAW/G that are relevant to the context in which they are implemented.

2. Nurturing reciprocal trust, responsibility and accountability

The UN Trust Fund adopts the principle of *reciprocal trust, responsibility and accountability* to highlight its intention to break power hierarchies and create platforms for learning and collective growth through an open exchange and transparent procedures. We recognize that holding partners/grantees accountable for ERAW/G initiatives and financial resources entrusted to their management carries an equal responsibility for the UN Trust Fund to ensure that partners/grantees are aware of and capacitated to deliver on expectations and requirements.

3. Ensuring sustainability and resilience

Recognizing the essential role of CSOs, especially WROs, in sustaining transformational change beyond project duration, and with the objective of building long-term sustainability and resilience in a rapidly changing environment, the UN Trust Fund's understanding of *sustainability* will expand beyond programming results to include *organizational sustainability and resilience*.

4. Building and strengthening relationships of mutual enablement

Understanding power as a *relationship of mutual enablement* is one of the grounding feminist principles that we embrace both as a core value and a guiding principle. We will continue to apply this principle in the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 through the exercise of our convening power and ongoing dialogues with all our stakeholders and partners to inform and shape our collective actions. The UN Trust Fund will act as an *enabler that provides funding, visibility and capacity development*. Its grantees will be *drivers of change in the contexts of their own operation* and will enable the UN Trust Fund to *better understand the realities of women across the world, sharpen its advocacy messages and elevate practice-based knowledge to inform global programming, policies and decision-making*. This continuous dynamic of exchange will aim to shape space for joint and collective action across the UN Trust Fund multi-stakeholder community.



Participants in the UN Trust Fund's Grantee Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019. Credit: Sulejman Omerbasic/UN Trust Fund

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2021-2025

5.1. Vision and mission

Our vision is in line with international human rights and humanitarian law, agreed norms and standard-setting instruments at the global, regional and national levels. These set out the obligations of Member States to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all women and girls, including ending VAW/G and achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. This vision is also aligned with the UN Women vision of development results in the field of ending VAW/G.

To help achieve this vision, **the UN Trust Fund's mission over the next five years will be to enable CSOs, especially WROs and those representing the most marginalized groups, to play a central role in delivering survivor-centred and demand-driven initiatives and to support their programmes to achieve a sustainable impact on ending VAW/G in a manner that contributes to global solidarity, partnerships and stronger, inclusive feminist movements.**



The UN Trust Fund's vision is a world of global solidarity in which all women and girls live free from all forms of violence and enjoy and exercise their human rights.

5.2. Theory of Action

The UN Trust Fund's Theory of Action for the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, focused on its contribution, results and their interrelations, is grounded within the broader UN Women Theory of Change for ending VAW/G. It centres on providing support to CSOs, especially WROs, as a key vehicle of change to achieve the shared vision of a world free of VAW/G.

On the basis of the review of lessons learned, the focus of grant-giving for CSOs/WROs will remain on the following key thematic EVAW/G areas: *(1) improved access for women and girls to essential, specialist, safe and adequate multisectoral services; (2) improved prevention of VAW/G through changes in behaviours, practices and attitudes; and (3) increased effectiveness of legislation, policies, national action plans and accountability systems.*

However, **thematic areas may be influenced and adapted over time through analysis of the demand-driven priorities of CSOs and WROs as they emerge.** Demand will be periodically reviewed to identify the evolving forms of VAW/G, response strategies and other relevant trends. The review will further assess whether the prioritization meets the needs of women and girls effectively, which will inform potential revisions, adaptations and adjustments in the grant-making processes.

The work of the CSOs/WROs in the three thematic areas will be supported by **three key UN Trust Fund outcome areas:**

- *Enabling CSOs and WROs in their demand-driven efforts to end VAW/G;*
- *Ensuring UN, national and other partner EVAW/G programming is informed by practitioner-based knowledge; and*
- *Mobilizing financial and political support for the essential role of CSOs and WROs in ending VAW/G.*

.....
A Theory of Action articulates the subset of interventions from the Theory of Change where a specific organization will take action, based on the belief that it is best positioned to have impact compared to – or in partnership with – other actors.
.....

Why focus on CSOs and WROs?

As documented above, in all efforts to prevent and respond to VAW/G, CSOs, especially WROs, are a key channel for reaching women and girls, especially those most at risk of being left behind. They deliver essential, specialist services and prevention programmes that reach communities in need, often when there is a lack of (or lack of access to) general government services. Evidence shows that **they are critical in preventing and ending VAW/G**, especially for community-level responses and prevention efforts, and for tackling attitudinal and social norms that uphold gender inequality. Furthermore, they often represent survivors and support women and girls as agents of change who have voice and agency over their own lives – critical to achieving gender equality.

Therefore, this Theory of Action is built on **the belief that if CSOs/WROs are enabled to deliver demand-driven initiatives that meet the needs of women and girls in their own communities, more sustainable progress in ending VAW/G in public and private spaces can be achieved, especially for the most marginalized and those experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.**

Although the Theory of Action centres on supporting and enabling CSOs, it also recognizes other essential pathways to change. National governments are the primary duty bearers that must deliver critical prevention and response programmes while protecting and ensuring the human rights of all women and girls through the law and this often includes a critical role for regional and local governments as well.

Furthermore, UN agencies, bilateral and multilateral agencies, funds and NGOs are also delivering significant EVAW/G initiatives across the globe, including through multisectoral partnerships. Therefore, the Theory of Action takes the view that all these initiatives – including the joint UN programmes – can be more effective, in achieving impact and meeting the needs of women and girls, if **fully informed by the practitioner-led evidence and knowledge originating from the work of CSOs and WROs.** Thus, we will pursue increased interaction, collaboration and coordination for collective action and joint advocacy with a range of partners committed to ending VAW/G including, but not limited to, other UN Women-managed funds supporting CSOs/WROs (for example, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund); the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative; women's and human rights mechanisms, UN agencies, bodies and organs (including the Office of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences); women's funds; UN Member States; and civil society actors.

Evidence shows that EVAW/G initiatives led by civil society,

including as part of comprehensive approaches, are more responsive to community needs and contribute to efforts to end VAW/G. This leadership role can be ensured only through consistent global financial and political support for work and approaches that are led by civil society. If CSOs and WROs are recognized as essential to EVAW/G efforts through **concrete expressions of solidarity from key global stakeholders and resourced strategically**, then impact in ending VAW/G will grow too. This would further contribute to the **growth of wider feminist movements** and gains on SDG 5 overall.

The UN Trust Fund is uniquely able to influence these pathways as a UN-system wide, global, grant-giving mechanism that focuses on all forms of VAW/G and that prioritizes funding for CSOs and WROs. Its 24-year institutional history, evidence of results and testimonies from partners and grantees support the case for the UN Trust Fund's role in this Theory of Action. As a UN inter-agency mechanism, and in partnership with a range of partners (inside and outside the UN system), the UN Trust Fund can play a key convening role and contribute to advancing global solidarity for actionable commitments on ending VAW/G.

By providing CSOs and WROs with long-term and more flexible funding, coupled with programmatic and operational support during the grant implementation period that is appropriate to meet demand-driven needs, the UN Trust Fund will deepen its commitment to responsible and sustainable grant-giving, aiming to inspire a higher level of grant-giving standards and responsiveness to civil society needs.

At an *operational level* the UN Trust Fund Secretariat contributes to this Theory of Action through:

- Strategic selection of grants and their efficient and effective management;
- Implementation of policies and procedures for fair and transparent grant-giving;
- Capacity development based on the needs and demands of grantees;
- Knowledge exchange for learning from CSO/WRO programmes and operations; and

- Resource mobilization and advocacy for global solidarity and mutually enabling partnerships.

For a diagrammatic representation of the UN Trust Fund's Theory of Action, please see *Appendix A*.

5.3. Strategic results

This section explains the Theory of Action and operationalizes the values and principles set out earlier through more concrete, measurable **results and commitments**.

At the **high impact level**, the UN Trust Fund aims to contribute to **achievement of the SDG 5** and the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, which would subsequently accelerate progress on all other SDGs. Its work between 2021 and 2025 will directly support three SDG 5 targets:

- 5.1: to end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere;
- 5.2: to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; and
- 5.3: to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

At the development impact level, the UN Trust Fund aims to ensure that more women and girls, especially the most marginalized and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination, can exercise their human right to live a life free of all forms of violence.

Based on lessons learned from the previous Strategic Plan, the Mid Term Review and consultations with stakeholders, the UN Trust Fund believes that if the **most marginalized women and girls and those at risk of being left furthest behind** are prioritized in its work over the next five years, progress towards achieving SDG 5 can be accelerated since those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination are at higher risk of VAW/G and exclusion. Also, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, progress on ending VAW/G is fragile and, in some cases, regressing. Therefore, the most marginalized must be reached – **intentionally and proactively**.

Development outcomes

At the **development outcomes** level, the UN Trust Fund aims to contribute through the following three pathways:



Outcome 1: CSOs and WROs are enabled to achieve sustainable impact on ending VAW/G, with a focus on the most marginalized women and girls and intersecting forms of discrimination.



Outcome 2: UN, national and partner EVAW/G policy, programming and funding are more relevant to the needs of women and girls as a result of the uptake of knowledge and evidence provided by CSOs/WROs.



Outcome 3: Stakeholders are mobilized in global solidarity to recognize and resource the essential role of CSOs/WROs and inclusive feminist movements in ending VAW/G.

While these outcomes are not entirely under the UN Trust Fund's control, progress will be monitored and inform any necessary changes to ensure the best likelihood of influence. For example, under **Outcome 1**, success criteria would include that more CSOs/WROs are achieving sustainable impact on ending VAW/G, through scale-up, replication or adaption of UN Trust Fund initiatives by other UN agencies, CSOs/WROs, governments and other partners. Examples of how this has been achieved in the past include the success of projects funded under the "invitation only window" such as that implemented by Physicians for Human Rights, which developed an award winning mobile app "MediCapt" that clinicians can use to compile forensic medical evidence of violence against women and securely transmit the data to police, lawyers and judges. The UN Trust Fund initially funded the development stage of the project (2011-2014)¹⁰⁸ and then, based on results, provided a second grant (2016-2019) for scale up across Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.¹⁰⁹

Under **Outcome 2**, over the medium to long term the UN Trust Fund will monitor trends in investment in evidence-based programming. The hope is that there will be a shift in investments from being primarily based on rigorous scientific methods of evaluations to ones that also value and include ongoing learning and practice-led evidence and knowledge, to better capture women's lived realities in all their diversity, and as demanded by women's rights groups. This would include investment in CSO/WRO practitioner/research partnerships in the Global South. Simultaneously this evidence will be channelled into the UN system and beyond in order to encourage uptake of learning and further implementation, with recognition of the role of activists and CSOs/WROs in the generation of knowledge.

Under **Outcome 3**, advocacy for and recognition of the essential role of CSOs/WROs and inclusive feminist movements in EVAW/G efforts, as well as calls for their resourcing, will be monitored through significant global commitments, policy statements and funding decisions to increase resourcing of the EVAW/G agenda in international fora.



FACT conducted “know your rights” community dialogue sessions at Dzaleka refugee camp with refugee women to claim their human rights. Credit: Jessica Mphasa, FACT Malawi

Development outputs

The UN Trust Fund will contribute to the above aspirations through specific development outputs and organizational results. These are clustered around three *outcome areas* outlined earlier for ease of measurement and reporting, but each output is likely to contribute to multiple outcomes via cross-cutting/horizontal activities.

Development output 1: Grant-giving and capacity development

More CSOs and WROs are enabled by the UN Trust Fund through:

- Long-term and flexible¹¹⁰ funding to meet demand-driven needs, project focus and approach;
- Organizational support, accompaniment and capacity development to comply with grant requirements and be resilient and sustainable organizations; and
- Programmatic support and capacity development to plan and implement principled ERAW/G initiatives.

The UN Trust Fund’s grant-giving process will remain fair, transparent, demand-driven, context-informed and open for applications from eligible CSOs focused on *all* forms of violence and all women and girls in *all* contexts in eligible countries/territories. Over the period of this Strategic Plan, the UN Trust Fund will aim to **extend its current grant-giving timeline from three to a maximum of six years**, building on lessons learned from the UN Trust Fund’s “invitation only” window of grants.

The UN Trust Fund will prioritize projects that clearly **apply the ERAW/G programming principles of UN Women**

and the UN Trust Fund and those that work with the most marginalized women and girls and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination, placing paramount importance on an intersectional approach and the principle of leaving no one behind.

The UN Trust Fund's grant selection process will progressively prioritize organizations where stakeholders confirm its added value/niche in communities, focusing on **WROs, women and girl-led organizations** and organizations with local/community-level reach and/or an ability to ensure EAW/G projects have impact on those most left behind.¹¹¹

The UN Trust Fund **will retain the programmatic thematic areas** identified in the previous Strategic Plan and validated by all stakeholders to be of continuing relevance:

- improved access for women and girls to **essential, specialist, safe and adequate multisectoral services**.
- increased effectiveness of **legislation, policies, national action plans** and accountability; and
- improved **prevention** of VAW/G through changes in behaviours, practices and attitudes.

In order to support selected grantees in delivering their projects, including ensuring their compliance with grant requirements and building their resilience and adaptability, the UN Trust Fund will:

- **Create opportunities for CSOs and WROs to access long-term and more flexible funding suitable for different programmatic approaches**, that can allow for programme results to mature, innovative ideas to flourish and learning and adaptation to take place;
- **Accompany CSOs and WROs through project formulation, results-based management and reporting, finance and operational requirements through capacity development** – based on needs assessments – to effectively plan and manage grant funds. The aim is to contribute to developing organizational and staff capacity that can lead to more resilient and sustainable organizations.
- **Support CSOs and WROs to develop or access additional capacities needed for principled EAW/G programming, learning and knowledge management** – based on needs and demand – including through partnerships, collaboration and knowledge exchange at country, regional and global levels. **The focus will be specifically on developing national/local capacities in the Global South.**

A grant-giving and capacity development action plan will be developed for Output 1 in 2021.

Development output 2: Knowledge and learning

UN and key partners are more informed by and/or actively engaged in:

- Expertise, knowledge products, data and analysis on CSO needs and EAW/G trends co-produced by the UN Trust Fund Secretariat;
- Inclusive knowledge exchange facilitated by the UN Trust Fund on CSO and EAW/G operations and programming, with a focus on practitioner-based knowledge; and
- Knowledge produced by CSOs/WROs from practice-based learning, monitoring and evaluations during EAW/G programming funded by the UN Trust Fund.

Building on the progress of the Learning Hub and Evaluation Library, with over 100 reports, the UN Trust Fund will focus on broadening and deepening work on EAW/G knowledge. The focus on evaluations and investment in rigorous evaluation methodologies will be retained, but be more intentional and strategic in the selection of projects for evaluation on the basis of gaps in the evidence base. The UN Trust Fund will also enhance evidence and data sharing from grantees' applications and overall portfolio knowledge, as a unique and valuable contribution to the EAW/G evidence field. Specifically it will:

- Deliver an online collaboration platform and series of webinars for learning exchange and collaboration with partners, that will complement the existing UN Women Virtual Knowledge Hub on ending VAW/G;
- Publish signature products with synthesised grantee knowledge, filling evidence gaps and working in collaboration with others, including grantees;
- Fund specific research components for a subset of grants coupled with support for practitioner-based knowledge for all grants;
- Deliver high quality cluster or thematic evaluations for a subset of grantees (centralized evaluation); and
- Invest in and support CSOs in the design and management of external, project evaluations (grantee evaluations).

Based on need and demand, the **UN Trust Fund will provide specialized technical assistance and capacity development to CSOs and WROs** on knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation, as relevant to their projects, aligned with the capacity development action plan under Output 1. However, **the primary focus on capacity development for knowledge will be facilitating South-South cooperation and exchange between grantees and EAW/G partners, rather than direct support by the UN Trust Fund.**

Building on successful examples such as our *Knowledge Briefs on the Impact of COVID-19 on VAW/G and CSOs*¹² in 2020, **the UN Trust Fund will continue to share and disseminate its knowledge.** It will ensure that its analysis – for example from grant application data or monitoring and evaluation reports – fully informs the design of its strategic direction for Calls for Proposals, as well as its resource mobilization and advocacy efforts and messages. For example, the analysis of demand may further inform whether there is a need for targeted capacity development for grant application in regions that are underrepresented in the applications in order to ensure equitable access to funding.

A learning and knowledge management action plan will be developed for Output 2 in 2021.

Development output 3: Partnerships, resource mobilization and advocacy

The UN Trust Fund will work to expand and capitalize on its convening potential by directing attention to actionable strategic advocacy and resource mobilization priorities based on partnerships founded on trust and rooted in a shared goal. The UN Trust Fund contributes actively to the Generation Equality Action initiative and Output 3 efforts are coordinated and aligned with the emerging positions and messages of this important global coalition of EVAW/G partners.

Stakeholders and partners are mobilized through UN Trust Fund efforts to:

- Resource CSOs/WROs with reliable, flexible and long-term funding to enable them to exercise their expertise in EVAW/G programming;
- Create joint advocacy opportunities for elevating the programmatic successes and achievements of CSOs/WROs to highlight their key role in building autochthonous feminist/women's movements; and
- Amplify the voices of CSOs/WROs and create platforms to showcase their essential role and contribution to ending VAW/G and to inform the programmatic, policy and funding decisions of the UN system, UN Member States and beyond.

In order to deliver on these, the UN Trust Fund will:

- **Build and work in partnership** with UN agencies, UN Member States, UN women's and human rights mechanisms, the private sector, women's funds, young feminist organizations, civil society partners and relevant initiatives to support achievement of SDG 5 (targets 5.1,

5.2 and 5.3) in a manner that is mutually enabling and that contributes to the global feminist movement. This will be done through strategic and concerted communications, advocacy and resource mobilization efforts.

- **Shed light on intersecting forms of discrimination and systems of oppression** and ensure that all its platforms amplify the voices, agency and experiences of women and girls who have been actively dismantling and advocating against structural inequalities and barriers to the fulfilment and enjoyment of their human rights.
- **Aim to increase resources** available for the EVAW/G work of CSOs/WROs through its grant-giving and beyond. It will advocate for more EVAW/G targeted allocations in development aid budgets, with a particular focus on direct funding modalities to CSOs/WROs.
- **Lead by doing, while also advocating for a progressive increase of the portion of flexible funding in grant-giving to end VAW/G**, with a specific focus on the needs of small WROs, institutional strengthening, access and inclusivity measures to meet the needs of those most at risk of being left behind and increased attention to collective and individual self-care.
- **Lobby within the UN and externally for improved accessibility and simplification of grant application and reporting processes**, recognizing that applying for and managing grants can be a burden, especially for smaller WROs.
- **Improve the accessibility and inclusivity of its platforms** and engagement mechanisms to improve the outreach and visibility of CSOs/WROs in international fora. Through these platforms the UN Trust Fund will promote partnerships, networking and collaboration at the country, regional and global levels for collective action on ending VAW/G.
- **Strategically leverage its position in the UN system** for enhanced uptake of practice-based knowledge and joint advocacy for CSOs/WROs, including through proactive and planned engagement with regional and global PACs, **expanding the involvement of PACs beyond grant selection.** For example, the UN Trust Fund intends to fully explore how PACs can play a more strategic role in joint advocacy and inter-agency knowledge exchanges on ending VAW/G, in particular from the perspective of learning from civil society grantees.

A resource mobilization and advocacy action plan will be developed for Output 3 in 2021.



Project activities focus on reducing violence in families, which has positive knock-on effects on community social dynamics and attitudes towards women and girls. Credit: International Alert, Tajikistan

Organizational results

The full range of *organizational results* expected from the UN Trust Fund under the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 are listed in *Appendix A: Theory of Action* and elaborated in more detail in *Chapter 6: Implementing the Strategic Plan*. In summary, the UN Trust Fund will:

- **Ensure continued adherence and further contribution to the development of UN Women policies and procedures as relevant for grant-giving** while delivering on its commitments as outlined in this Strategic Plan;
- **Ensure the programmatic and financial accountability of grants** through timely and effective grant and risk management, oversight, monitoring and reporting;
- **Ensure that it is progressively, appropriately staffed with the skills necessary to implement the Strategic Plan and manage its complex operations.** This will involve the development of the UN Trust Fund's Secretariat's *Workforce Plan* in 2021 to ensure that an adequate structure and human and financial resources are put in place; and
- Grounded in the vision of a transformative business model, **remain fully committed to maintaining its reputation for being an effective, efficient and trusted partner through continual assessment and improvement of its core operations** (financial management and oversight, grant and risk management, results monitoring and reporting, donor and external relations management and strategic planning).



Right: Rebecca Sako, an expert on ending violence against women, makes an input during a committee meeting run by EWEI Nigeria.

Credit: Ibi Divine Doo/EWEI

Left: Participants in the UN Trust Fund's Grantee Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019.

Credit: Sulejman Omerbasic/UN Trust Fund

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

6.1. Business model and operations

In the past five years, the scope of the UN Trust Fund's portfolio has broadened, the group of grantees has diversified and the funding envelope has increased considerably. In that time, the UN Trust Fund has continuously worked to improve its business model and match its operations to deliver results. Some areas of improvement were specifically identified in the Mid Term Review, including capturing the fine detail of all operational aspects of the UN Trust Fund's work and allocating sufficient resources for the full implementation of the Strategic Plan. Analysis and findings from the Global Grantee Convention and Grantee Annual Surveys have also indicated specific recommendations on the need to improve the business model to support sustainable change.

In 2020, the UN Trust Fund initiated a Business Model Review by mapping and updating workflows to remove operational bottlenecks, streamline systems and processes and design optimized, efficient and effective delivery platforms. During this process, the UN Trust Fund invested in a new Grants Management System to improve efficiency with critical elements to enhance and facilitate planning and financial and results management, working toward the highest level of compliance. In addition, it has initiated a review of the support provided to grantees to increase capacity and collaboration for continuous knowledge and learning, adaptive management and innovation.

In the last Strategic Plan period, an external and internal audit of the UN Trust Fund found its internal controls, governance, and risk management processes were satisfactory.¹¹³ Since the implementation of the UN Women harmonized audit approach in 2014, the UN Trust Fund has audited 68 projects in 55 countries covering a total of USD16.5 million in expenditures from grant-giving Cycles 15 to 21 (which represent 21 per cent of

the total amount given for these cycles). These grantee audit findings and recommendations have broadened the UN Trust Fund's understanding of grantees' operational and capacity gaps and how best to respond to and address these. As part of this learning process, the UN Trust Fund elevated the capacity development component and put in place innovative Project Performance Assessment Criteria that keep track of the performance and health of the portfolio overall, acting as an early warning system to promptly identify and tackle performance issues.

In 2021 in the context of the on-going Business Model Review, the UN Trust Fund will continue to appraise basic standards to ensure they comply with UN Women policies and procedures. It will continue to improve grantees' operational, budgetary and financial management policies and procedures and, in parallel, enhance capacity development efforts to meet grant requirements.

As part of developing the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, a **Workforce Plan** will be undertaken which will outline workflow and ensure adequate working structures and the allocation of appropriate resources.

6.2. Risk management

The UN Trust Fund's risk management framework is an ongoing process designed to identify potential events that may affect grant implementation. It encompasses areas such as policy, procedures, guidance, tools and techniques. UN Women, as administrator, is accountable for the proper use of funds entrusted to it, including through the UN Trust Fund. Under this accountability framework, the UN Trust Fund will continue to follow all applicable UN Women rules, regulations, policies and procedures and will carry out an annual risk assessment in line with the **UN Women fraud prevention policy framework**. The output of this risk assessment will be monitored and updated every year in line with annual work plans.

Through the initial **Grantee Organizational Assessment**, the UN Trust Fund will identify the programmatic and operational capacity gaps and put in place a robust **Capacity Development Action Plan**, which includes tailored feedback and action points to help grantees improve procedures, control, ethics and safety and risk mitigation mechanisms. Throughout project implementation, grantees will continue to adhere to UN Women rules and regulations. This includes reporting on project progress and delivery of results against agreed work plans in accordance with reporting schedules and formats

set out in the donor agreement. All required and relevant documentation and evidence that describe the proper use of project resources in conformity with the agreement must also be maintained and made available to UN Women monitors and designated auditors.

This will be complemented by a solid assurance mechanism – covering programming and financial support – undertaken for all partners throughout the project life cycle. Every grantee organization will have an assigned portfolio manager to ensure real-time assessment of the status of the project and report on risks. Each project is periodically assessed for performance across key criteria that cover financial matters, ethics and safety management capacities as well as results delivery. This is a tool for dialogue with grantees on areas of strength and capacity gaps.

Where emerging global challenges, such as COVID-19 for example, and their complexities pose new risks that are likely to have an impact on the work of grantees and project delivery, the UN Trust Fund will continue to reassess and react as and when necessary and prioritize critical responses.

The initial *Organizational Assessment* will be tested periodically by monitoring identified risks and mitigating actions will be put in place to help organizations increase their institutional capacity and business continuity. The ultimate goal is to help build the resilience, long-term viability and success of inclusive feminists movements. The capacity development action plan will outline specific pathways for providing such support, particularly to smaller WROs. In addition, the UN Trust Fund will also develop a new grants risk management strategy to accompany the new Strategic Plan. Within this framework, risks will be assessed, reviewed and adjusted for each funding cycle as part of the due diligence process and as relevant to the context of newly funded projects.

The UN Trust Fund prioritizes the principle of “do no harm” in both project implementation and in the assessment of organizations supported. One of the key assessment criteria introduced during the previous Strategic Plan cycle in selecting grantees is organizational preparedness to address cases of sexual harassment and assault (SHA) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA);¹¹⁴ assessment of the organizational SHA/SEA policies has become an integral part of the **implementing partner capacity assessment**, specifically:

“Applicants must provide information on whether the organization has systems in place for reporting allegations of Sexual Harassment and Assault (SHA) as well as Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), whether as part of existing Human Resource policies or as a separate document. This includes information on measures in place for investigating



A budget and finance training activity for women and girls in Isiolo, Kenya. Credit: CREAW, Kenya

allegations of SHA/SEA in a timely manner as well as procedures to take disciplinary action against perpetrators. Those applicants that do not have written policies will be expected to develop them within the first year of project implementation if selected for a grant.”

The UN Trust Fund requires grantees to **countersign a grant award letter** whereby they acknowledge that:

“The UN has a zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). It is the responsibility of implementing partners to report allegations of SEA to the UN partner entity (UN-Women in this instance), as part of your reporting obligation, where such allegations arise in the context of implementing UN-supported programmes. The UN Trust Fund does not partner with entities that fail to address SEA through appropriate preventive measures, investigation and corrective action. Such failures shall constitute grounds for the termination of the funded project by the UN Trust Fund.”

In addition, to ensure full understanding of compliance with the SHA/SEA requirements, the UN Trust Fund has integrated this within its capacity development training which covers UN definitions related to SHA/SEA and UN and grantee roles and responsibilities.



Participants in the UN Trust Fund's Grantee Convention in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2019 including Gabriella Wright (right) and Chinyere Eyoh (left). Credit: Sulejman Omerbasic/UN Trust Fund

7 STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

This Strategic Plan will be managed and monitored through the accompanying Results Framework, which translates the plan into measurable results. The Results Framework will be used to monitor and report progress at least once a year for the UN Trust Fund's annual report.

The indicators in the Results Framework will not be the only source for reviewing progress; grantee project evaluations, testimonies and cases studies from beneficiaries and UN Trust Fund research and other evidence will also be used to analyse and report on progress. The UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan itself will be subject to an independent external evaluation, to be commissioned in the last year or shortly after. A midterm review may also be carried out during the five-year period to assess whether the Strategic Plan is on track or needs to be adjusted for the final two years.

The Results Framework is intended to be a management tool and a working document that will be adjusted and refined as needed. The competitive nature of the UN Trust Fund's grant-giving process makes it challenging to set aggregate targets in some areas. Building on the success of the previous Results Framework, the UN Trust Fund will continue to use some common indicators to aggregate data but – in line with the values and principles set out in this Strategic Plan – it will ensure that this is done with CSOs' work first and foremost in mind; that is, building indicators from the bottom up, through consultation with grantees and selecting measures useful to them.

Our full approach to knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation – including tracking progress against the Strategic Plan – will be elaborated in the learning and knowledge management action plan.

Each year, the UN Trust Fund submits a report to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Council. The UN Trust Fund also provides a regular annual report and a yearly certified financial report, delivered in accordance with UN Women's financial rules and regulations, to all donors by 30 June. These reports provide information on the UN Trust Fund and its grantees' results, achievements and contextual challenges. It gives insights into the difference these joint efforts make around the world. Reporting by the UN Trust Fund follows its Strategic Plan and Results Framework.

The UN Trust Fund also provides regular annual inputs to the UN Women Annual Report to the Executive Board. In addition, the UN Trust Fund contributes on a regular basis to the UN system and joint programmes thematic reporting, for example:

- Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women: Report of the Secretary-General

- Trafficking in women and girls: Report of the Secretary-General
- Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations: Report of the Secretary-General
- Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (UNHCR)
- The UN Trust Fund also provides reporting inputs to UNAIDS Joint Programme results as part of UN Women obligations as a Co-sponsor of UNAIDS. As of 2018, UN Women has the role of lead convener on **eliminating gender inequality and gender-based violence** in the refined UNAIDS Division of Labour.

As of 2019, the UN Trust Fund also provides a regular annual report to the EU/UN Spotlight Initiative on the portfolio of the grantees managed with the resources entrusted to the UN Trust Fund through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Secretariat of the Spotlight Initiative.

Run Saroeun, an activist for women and girls with disabilities, receives support for her family, including her sister who lives with a disability. Credit: Sambath Rachna, ADD International, Cambodia



The background is a solid dark blue. It features several abstract, organic shapes in a lighter blue and a bright orange. One orange shape is in the top left corner. Another orange shape is in the bottom right corner. There are also some light blue shapes. A prominent feature is a large, irregular shape in the upper left quadrant filled with a pattern of small, light blue dots. Another similar dotted shape is located in the lower right quadrant.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THEORY OF ACTION (DIAGRAM)

UN TRUST FUND VISION: A world of global solidarity in which all women and girls live free from all forms of violence and enjoy and exercise their human rights.

Super Impact:
SDGs 5.1, 5.2, 5.3

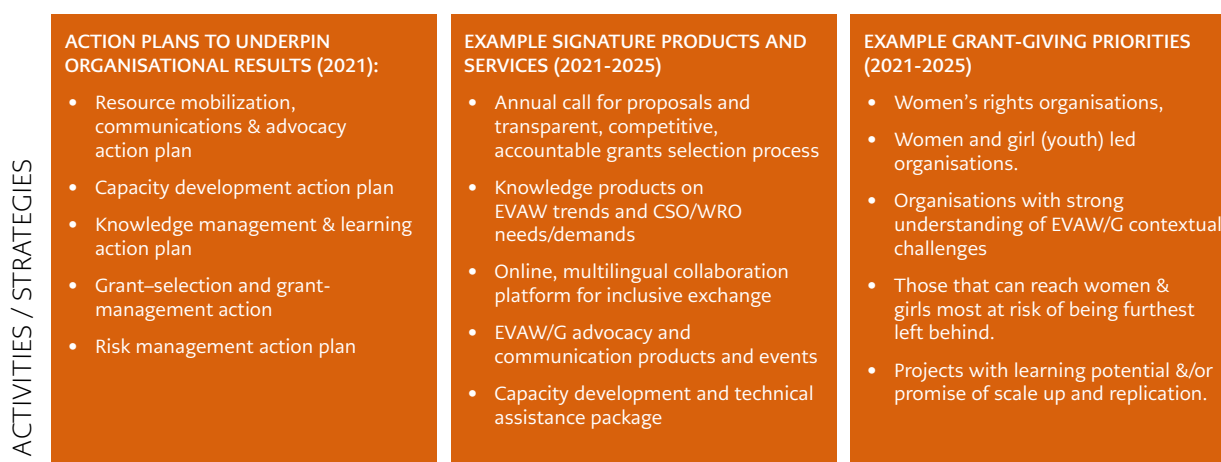
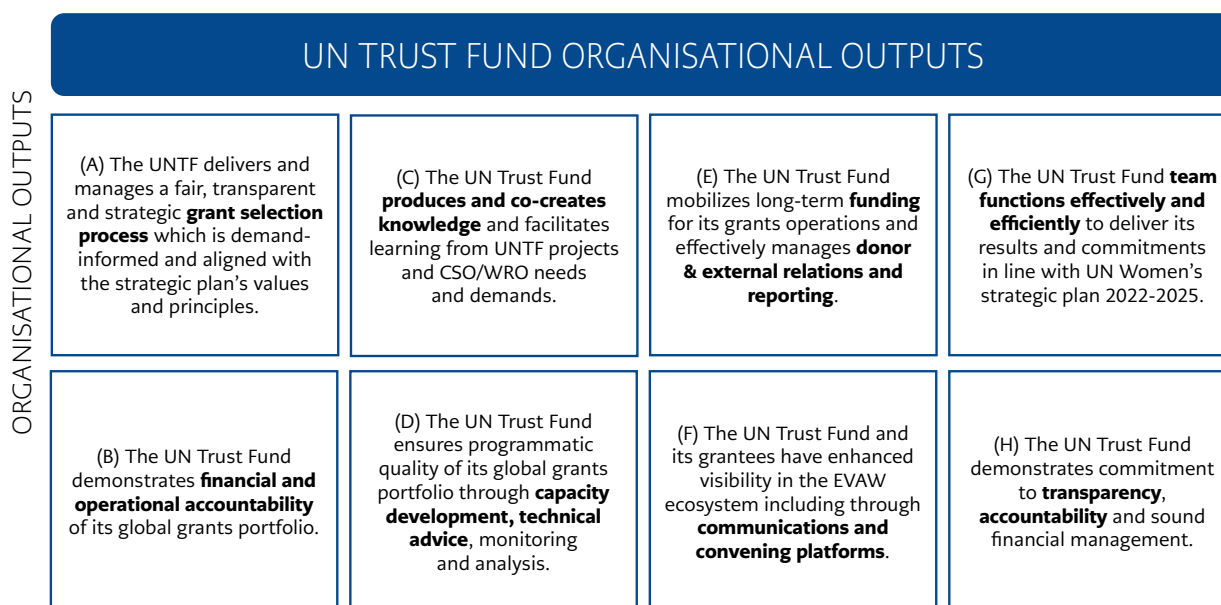
IMPACT: More women and girls, especially the most marginalized and those experiencing intersecting forms of discrimination, can exercise their human right to live a life free of all forms of violence.



Problem statement: one in three women globally have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. CSOs/WROs – at the forefront of response and prevention – are under resourced and insufficiently recognised as key drivers of transformative change.



UN TRUST FUND MISSION: to enable CSOs, especially WROs and those that represent the most marginalised groups, to play a central role in delivering survivor-centred and demand-driven initiatives and to support their programmes to achieve sustainable impact on EVAW/G in a manner that contributes to global solidarity, partnerships, and inclusive feminist movements.



Key mechanism: The UN Trust Fund's **Global and Regional Programme Advisory Committees*** (PACs) – comprising of UN agencies, non-governmental organisations and EVAW/G experts - represent an institutional entry point for strengthening the coordination of efforts to end VAW/G across the UN system and with civil society partners. The UN Trust Fund will aim to build upon the PACs' role in grant-selection and strategic planning to motivate partners to engage in joint advocacy and uptake of evidence and practice-based knowledge from CSOs, as codified across the portfolio of its grantees.

The full version of the Results Framework will be published as an accompanying document to the Strategic Plan.

About this document: This diagram intended to provide a highly summarised view of the results the UN Trust Fund aims to achieve – and contribute to – over the Strategic Plan period. It is intended to illustrate the pathways through which the UN Trust Fund will effect change, based on those areas the Fund can have most impact. Development Results are those which cannot be achieved by the UN Trust Fund alone: the results belong to the women and girls, CSOs, partners and stakeholders who work together to impact change, linked to the SDGs and international commitments on EVAW. Organisational results are more under the control of the UN Trust Fund, subject to resourcing and operations under the UN Women's institutional framework.

APPENDIX B: CONSULTATION RECORD

Consultation Reference: The following organizations, associations and groups served as key informants and were consulted as part of the development of the UN Trust Fund Strategic Plan 2021-2025.

The UN Trust Fund expresses its sincere gratitude to all listed below for their contribution to the Strategic Plan development process. A special thank you to Ms. Patricia Keays in her role as Strategic Plan Development Coordinator and Mr. James Lang as Strategic Plan Development Consultant for their extensive work and for taking the lead on these consultations.

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	Kate Gilmore , Fellow, The Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard Kennedy School
	Jessica Horn , Director, Akiiki Consulting
	Lori Michau , Co-founder and Co-Director, Raising Voices
	Inas Miloud , Co-founder and Chairperson, Tamazight Women's Movement
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	Unice Ndonga Githinju, Executive Director, Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK)
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	Nancy Moloantoa, Regional Program Associate, Ford Foundation
	Esther Lever, Senior Programme Officer for Influencing - Research, Knowledge and Advocacy Team, Mama Cash
	Ginney Liu, Count Me In! (CMI!) Learning and Advocacy Officer, Mama Cash
	Nathalie Margi, Senior Advocacy Officer, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights
	Elizabeth Dartnall, Research Manager, Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)
	Angelica Pino, Grants Manager and Capacity Strengthening Specialist, Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)



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- To be considered a “women-led organization”, an organization must demonstrate that it is governed and led by women. This requires evidence that a minimum of 51 per cent of leadership positions across various decision-making levels in the organization, including at management, senior management and board levels, are held by women.
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