



IN BRIEF

UN WOMEN'S FUND FOR GENDER EQUALITY



Photo © Adamu Gudeta / UEWCA, Ethiopia.

The issue: Transforming commitments into tangible gains for women

Despite government commitments to international gender equality agreements, significant gender gaps prevail worldwide in nearly all aspects of political, economic, social and institutional life. Even in cases where gender equality laws and policies already exist, the most marginalized and socially excluded women and girls rarely see tangible gains trickle down to their communities and their lives.

As of July 2015 only 11 women currently serve as Heads of State and 13 as Heads of Government, and less than a quarter of the world's parliamentary members are women. Some 53 per cent of employed women depend on informal, under-regulated sectors such as domestic work and agriculture and less than 20 per cent of landholders are women.

For UN Women, the economic and political empowerment of women are preconditions for achieving gender equality and sustainable development.

Civil society organizations play a pivotal role in ensuring that women and girls' voices are heard and their contributions to the economy recognized. The post-2015 development era offers a unique opportunity to boost this untapped potential for transformational results. UN Women is ready to place women's organizations at the forefront of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with the help of its Fund for Gender Equality.

Our solution: Investing in innovative, civil society-led programmes

UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality is a global grant-making mechanism dedicated to gender equality and the economic and political empowerment of women. It adds value to the work of civil society organizations by:

- Sustaining them financially through multi-year grant awards of US\$ 200,000 to US\$ 1 million
- Supporting them with a package of technical services, strategic guidance and programme monitoring
- Strengthening their capacities to plan, implement, report on and evaluate programmes based on results-based management principles

A dynamic, responsive grant-making programme at UN Women, the Fund for Gender Equality supports initiatives that are expanding women's freedoms and opportunities to lead a meaningful life and realizing their potential as changemakers.

The Fund supports initiatives that demonstrate concrete results on the ground, especially for women in situations of marginalization—such as rural women, migrant women, domestic and informal workers, indigenous women and women living with HIV/AIDS.

The Fund's grants focus on six key priority areas:

INCREASING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP & PARTICIPATION

- Catalysing legislative and policy change
- Expanding and strengthening women's leadership
- Engaging women in electoral politics

INCREASING WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- Supporting rural women's access and control over economic resources
- Fostering women's sustainable entrepreneurship
- Ensuring women's access to decent work and social protection

High-impact results

The Fund's grantees are striving to close the gender gaps by bringing women and girls from diverse cultural, religious and/or ethnic communities into the mainstream. This can be done as: voters, market actors, community leaders, workers, political candidates and party leaders, land and property owners, civic office holders, natural resource managers and as agents of change for furthering peace and security.

In only six years and with a total investment of US\$ 64 million in grants, the Fund has touched the lives of more than 10 million direct beneficiaries, supported through 120 programmes, partnering with 145 organizations in 80 countries across Africa, Americas & the Caribbean, Arab States, Asia & the Pacific and Europe & Central Asia.

For example, rural women in Ethiopia have supported each other through savings groups to start sustainable income-generating activities. Thanks to newly passed legislation, domestic workers in Argentina and Chile are receiving minimum wages. Migrant workers in Viet Nam are benefiting from social protection services. Rural and refugee women in Lebanon are gaining skills that enabled them to open new businesses. Female candidates in Georgia have successfully run for office, and local authorities in Zimbabwe are now equipped to plan government budgets in a gender-responsive manner.

Key aggregated global results from 2014 active programmes include:

- 3,100 women have become land owners
- 58,000 women have participated in public forums and influenced policies
- 10,400 women have gained access to sustainable income and/or resources
- Grants supported the adoption of 550 new constitutional provisions, laws and policies to protect women's rights
- 340,000 stakeholders were sensitized on gender equality and women's rights

Implementing the SDGs

The Fund for Gender Equality is well-positioned to catalyze the work of civil society around the world and accelerate the implementation of gender equality commitments in the post-2015 development agenda. To that effect, in 2015 the Fund launched its third grant-making cycle. After a rigorous, independent selection process, 24 high-impact programmes geared to advance the Sustainable Development Goals have been technically strengthened and awarded grants for a value of US\$ 7.3 million. The Fund is seeking an additional US\$ 9 million to support another 26 top-quality selected programme proposals ready to start implementation immediately.

THE FUND'S DONORS

Launched in 2009 through a visionary contribution of US\$ 65 million by the Government of Spain, the Fund for Gender Equality has now consolidated itself as a multi-donor mechanism and is grateful to its main donors:

GOVERNMENTS: Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, The Netherlands, Japan, Mexico and Israel.

PRIVATE SECTOR: The Angelica Fuentes Foundation, Tupperware, Net-A-Porter and Goldman Sachs Gives.

UN WOMEN NATIONAL COMMITTEES: Iceland, Australia, United Kingdom, Germany and France.

The Fund is currently seeking donor contributions to support its upcoming 4th grant-making cycle.

For more information and donations, go to:
www.unwomen.org/fge

