

# HARVESTING KNOWLEDGE: PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS SERIES



## The FGE Legacy: Grantee Perspectives

Extract from UN Women  
Fund for Gender Equality's  
Annual Report 2016

# THE FGE LEGACY: GRANTEE PERSPECTIVES

What happens after FGE-supported programmes end? Beyond the output and outcome indicators, what were their main contributions, the most significant changes for women and girls? These were two of the questions that the FGE asked its grantees from the first (2009-2010) and second (2012-2013) grant-making cycles that had implemented a total of 96 programmes. The responses received from 70 per cent of former grantees offered some interesting findings.

Overall, the programmes reporting higher levels of results in scale or significance seem to have accelerated further progress. This type of catalytic effect often coincides with organizations that bring an open outlook and flexibility to adapt their strategies to circumstances. Successful initiatives empower programme beneficiaries as active players setting their own priorities and driving their own development processes. Mostly led by women's organizations and following feminist and gender equality principles, these programmes paved the way for gender-sensitive policy frameworks and consolidated networks that serve as springboards for women to gain political and economic power.

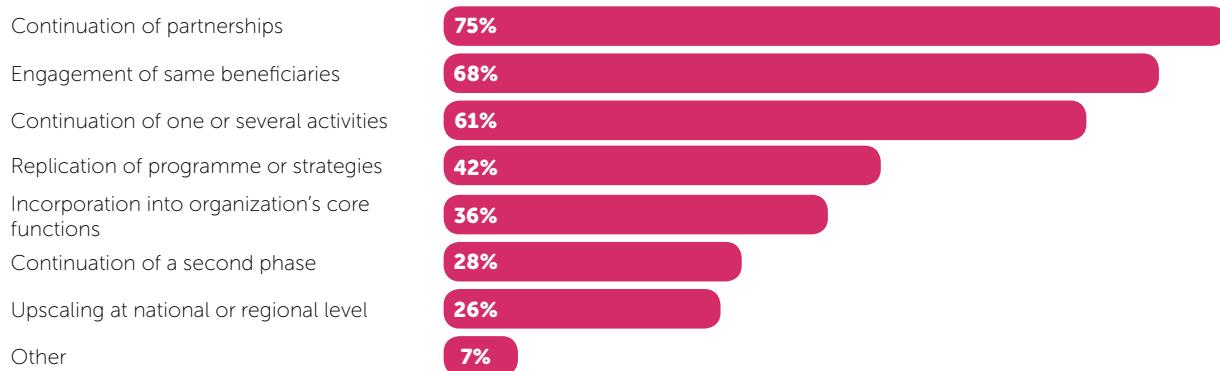
## AFTER THE FGE GRANT

All respondents indicated they continued their work in a variety of ways after FGE funding ended, with most of them maintaining partnerships created during the programme. While only 30 per cent implemented a second phase of the same programme, the large majority continued engaging with the same beneficiaries and sustained some activities. More than 40 per cent reported replicating their initiatives; one in four scaled them up.

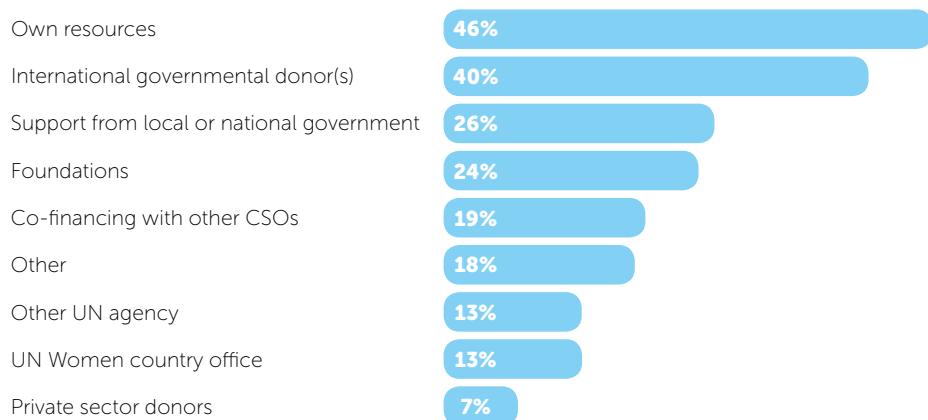
The FGE partnership helped grantees secure further support from other donors, including governments and foundations. Examples include the United States Department of State (Badya Center, Sudan) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (PRADAN and Jagori, India). One in four programmes continued to implement activities with the support of local or national governments. Private sector companies have also helped former grantees expand activities, including under corporate social responsibility policies. Commercial banks have offered free financial literacy training to saving groups members in Uganda, for instance, and business outlets have commercialized the products of rural women in Lebanon. Approximately 13 per cent of respondents received further funding from UN Women country offices, such as UEWCA in Ethiopia, whose member organization Society for Women and AIDS in Africa-Ethiopia is now the implementing partner of a UN Women programme promoting the economic empowerment of rural women through access to technology and innovation. Plans are on the way to replicate UEWCA's successful literacy model with South Sudanese refugees, maximizing the initial FGE investment.

The integration of successful grantee strategies into policies and broader programmes has been documented by government and peer civil society groups. For example, in the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Education moved towards bridging the technology gender gap by incorporating in its extended educational curriculum the successful, evidence-based strategy of girl-only science and technology clubs promoted by the Research Center for Feminine Action (CIPAF) – now benefitting over 4,500 girls in more than 80 schools from the initial 300 girls in 7 schools. In Algeria, both the Ministry of Solidarity and Family and NGOs are applying strategies pioneered by grantee El Ghaith to empower rural women based on local assets and market needs. In India, the ICT-enabled info-centres allowing marginalized women to understand their rights and secure services established by IT for Change and Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan have now been institutionalized by local councils.

## WHAT HAPPENED AFTER FGE-SUPPORTED PROGRAMME?



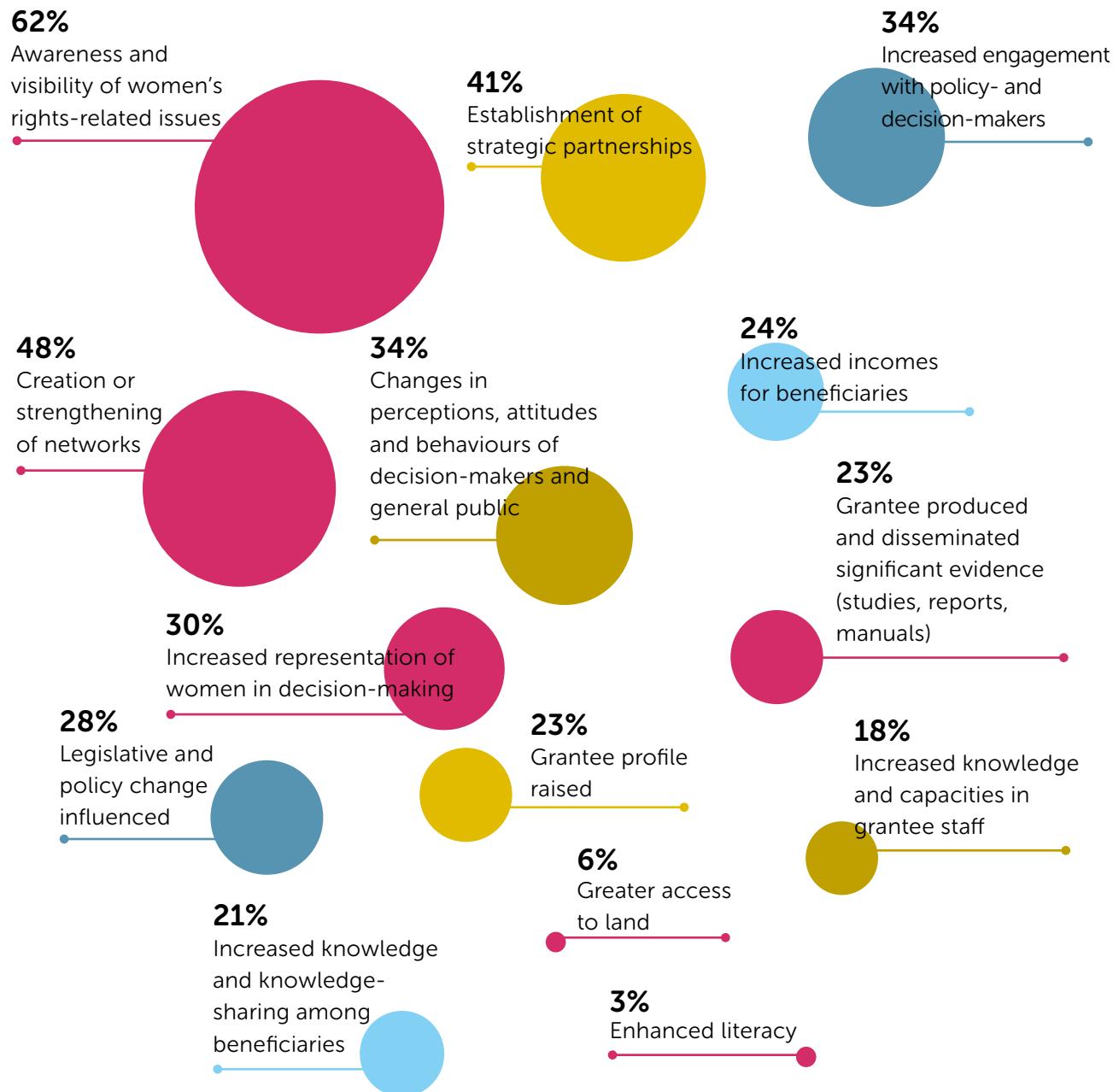
## SOURCES OF FUNDING AFTER FGE-SUPPORTED PROGRAMME



## A GLIMPSE AT THE TRANSFORMATION

Answers to the questionnaires illuminated trends in the types of successes that grantees believe produce the most significant changes. While this information is limited to grantee perceptions, it does provide a revealing glimpse of transformation triggered by FGE support.

### MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ACCORDING TO GRANTEES



## FROM INNER EMPOWERMENT TO SYSTEMIC CHANGE

### BUILDING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

One in five respondents pointed at increases in beneficiaries' knowledge and skills as among the main programme legacies. Stronger capacities helped improve self-esteem and social status, allowing women to apply their training in daily practice. Such skills also allowed women to sustain their participation in public matters and engage with decision-makers, which for 34 per cent of respondents was a key programme objective. Increased knowledge was also reported as having positive spillover effect in women's self-esteem, continued education, professional career and overall health for women and girls.

### BEYOND ECONOMIC GAINS

Women's increased economic resources were highlighted by 24 per cent of respondents. They all reported economic empowerment as an impact that goes beyond higher income. Empowerment has a strong spillover effect, leading women to invest more economic resources in new businesses and education, reducing their dependency and vulnerability, enhancing their participation in household decision-making, and encouraging many to become vocal community actors in development and political processes.

## AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENABLES EQUALITY

### MINDSETS, ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOURS

Among the most common results claimed by grantees were greater public awareness of issues related to women's rights, and changes in attitudes and behaviors; 62 per cent and 34 per cent of programmes, respectively, achieved these. Such results are difficult and costly to measure as they require specific social research data collection methods, so they are most often — with some notable exceptions — based either on grantees' perceptions or estimated via proxy indicators, such as an increased number of elected women or the passing of women's rights-related policies. While more efforts are needed in this regard, it seems clear, based on numerous testimonies, anecdotal evidence and reported results, that such transformations did occur.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY ADVANCES**

More than half of FGE-supported programmes aimed to influence laws and policies, and 90 per cent engaged in advocacy with local and national decision-makers. Almost 30 per cent of respondents claimed a positive influence on policy advancements as their main legacy. While many factors contribute to passing laws, policies and programmes, many grantees make substantive contributions to such gains, especially by mobilizing diverse actors around a common agenda and conducting evidence-based advocacy anchored in an international women's rights framework.

The remaining challenge often raised by grantees is implementation, given insufficient political will and scarce resources. For example, in Mexico, successful litigation won with the support of Equidad de Género led to a Supreme Court stipulation for gender electoral quotas. This established a precedent that enabled constitutional reform establishing gender parity in national electoral processes three years later.

## **GENERATING EVIDENCE**

Almost 25 percent of respondents reported major reports, studies, manuals and strategic documents as a critical contribution to women's rights. The data and evidence generated often shine a light on the realities of marginalized groups of women that were previously unknown to the public and/or to decision-makers. As a basis for awareness-raising, policy advocacy, training and further research, such studies have contributed to the knowledge base on women's empowerment and become lasting reference points for policy-makers and advocates.

## **THE POWER OF NETWORKS**

From community self-help groups to national alliances, women's empowerment goes hand in hand with their ability to learn, share and engage with their peers in safe spaces that permit leadership to flourish. Almost half of respondents considered the creation of groups and networks a major legacy. Seventy per cent of FGE supported programmes support or help develop these, and almost all use some sort of collective structure. Groups and networks continue to work after the programme ends, including economic empowerment groups that provide the most marginalized women with access to credit and savings, and political associations rooted in cross-party alliances or civil society networks that serve as powerful vehicles for advocacy.

## THE VALUE OF PIONEER INITIATIVES

Some grantees appreciated how FGE supports projects that otherwise are difficult to fund. The FGE's demand-driven approach and focus on national or regional mid-size organizations allow the flexibility to test novel strategies, work in non-traditional areas, and back initiatives that show high potential for impact with additional institutional support.

In Egypt, for example, the Women and Memory Forum has raised the visibility of women's roles in public spaces in past decades, challenging traditional gender norms. Its innovations have encompassed an unprecedented Archive of Women's Oral History, and the first Arabic manual on oral history documentation from a gender-sensitive perspective.

## THE IMPACT OF THE THREE-PILLAR APPROACH: STRONGER CIVIL SOCIETY TO ACCELERATE SOCIAL CHANGE

Almost 20 per cent of respondents underlined increased staff capacities. This is the result of FGE's purposeful investment in strengthening civil society skills related to results-based management and effective programming – the other two "pillars" complementing FGE's financial aid. Almost 25 per cent of respondents reported their organization has higher visibility and credibility among public authorities and other civil society stakeholders, as a result of having implemented sound and rigorous initiatives with proven results, and thanks to the exposure gained.

Silaka NGO in Cambodia has become the facilitator for CSOs working on gender at the national level and the key source of feedback from civil society to the Government in developing national indicators for SDG 5. In Tanzania, many local government authorities and civil society organizations have requested KWIECO to support them in replicating its notable successes in women's economic empowerment.

Many grantees reported programming is now further aligned with gender equality goals – especially those for which women's empowerment was not a central area of work prior to the intervention and that past strategies with proven effectiveness are better integrated in current activities. PRADAN India rearticulated its organizational mission, vision and approach around gender equality as a result of collaboration with feminist organization Jagori.

# FGE LEGACY CASE STUDY: POSITIVE WOMEN RAISE THEIR VOICES IN UKRAINE

**Grantee:** All Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS

**Grant amount:** US\$499,921

**Implementation period:** 2010-2011

**Direct beneficiaries reached:** 1,268

**Main strategies used:**

- “Power mapping” to identify allies at national and local levels
- Research and evidence, including sectoral gender audits, to build arguments for gender budgeting
- Promotion of sex-disaggregated data, women’s reproductive rights and integration of the needs of vulnerable groups in service delivery

**What made it unique:**

First project in Ukraine designed by women living with HIV for women living with HIV with a real opportunity for active participation and empowerment.

**Key results during the programme:**

- Unprecedented study analysing linkages between HIV/AIDS and gender
- Incorporation of gender aspects into the national HIV/AIDS plan
- Incorporation of HIV-related issues into the national gender equality programme
- Creation of the Ukrainian Network of Women Living with HIV/AIDS, which later became the Positive Women Network

**Key impact in the long term:**

The Positive Women Network has become the main driver of gender and HIV issues in Ukraine, with 42 member organizations.

In 2016, the network prepared the first alternative report to the CEDAW Committee submitted by women living with HIV on behalf of marginalized groups of women.

Model replicated in Ukraine for other national policies.

Research conducted was the basis for a law granting adoption rights to people living with HIV.



## MY IMPACT STORY

# OLENA STRYZHAK, CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF POSITIVE WOMEN NETWORK

Olena Stryzhak speaks with ICTV, a Ukrainian television channel.

Courtesy of Olena Stryzhak / Alina Yaroslavka

Today, Olena Stryzhak chairs the board of the charitable organization Positive Women Network in Ukraine. But back in 2000, the thought of getting involved in social activism had not even crossed her mind. Twenty-one years old and pregnant, her life took an unexpected turn when she learned at a routine pregnancy check-up that she was HIV positive. At that time, doctors advised pregnant HIV positive women to abort, but Olena decided to carry on.

*"This programme showed me that we can achieve great things by working together without a lot of money. We only need one dream, one goal."*

One year after she delivered her baby, she met a team from the **All Ukrainian Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS** and started to work with them, becoming head of the Cherkasy regional branch of the network in 2004. "I wanted to give women inspiration, to make them know about their rights and help them gain confidence and motivation," Olena explains. "The project supported by FGE encouraged us to develop activities from women's perspectives. We started to provide gender-sensitive services," Olena says. She recalls how the programme established day centres for children, allowing their HIV-affected mothers to attend classes and consultations. Self-defence courses helped women feel more independent and powerful.

Olena developed communication and negotiation skills as she called on politicians to change their understanding of HIV. "The Fund showed us that it is possible to influence decisions. It taught us to have clear targets for how to work with our government. Other donors don't do that."

In 2011, the many programme beneficiaries who had started to work at the network joined Olena in creating the first network of women living with HIV in Ukraine, known as Positive Women Network. The name reflects not only their medical status, but also an attitude of strength and independence. Conducting research and policy advocacy, providing mentoring and services, and promoting education and awareness, Positive Women Network is the main driver of gender and HIV issues in the country, representing women living with HIV and those vulnerable to contracting the virus. As the mother of a healthy daughter who is now 16, Olena has not lost passion for what she does. "My work can help other women who have just learned about their HIV condition, and are pregnant or want to have children."

# FGE LEGACY CASE STUDY: MAKING A CASE FOR GENDER BUDGETING IN UGANDA

**Grantee:** Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)

**Grant amount:** US\$205,000

**Implementation period:** 2010-2012

**Direct beneficiaries reached:** 550

**Main strategies used:**

- "Power mapping" to identify allies at national and local levels
- Research and evidence, including sectoral gender audits, to build arguments for gender budgeting
- "Village club model" for community monitoring of public budget allocations and service delivery, with strong women's participation
- Trial and error of different strategies and entry points for advocacy

**What made it unique:**

Piloting of a model to build demand and capacities for gender-responsive budgeting at the community level.

**Key results during the programme:**

- 16 clubs established in five districts with 320 members, leading to 50 petitions made to duty bearers, of which 60 per cent received a response
- 130 legislators and 70 technocrats gained gender budgeting skills
- Advocacy influenced adoption of parliamentary actions to encourage gender budgeting implementation, an increase in budgets for ministries such as Health, Education and Gender, and gender audits conducted in four ministries
- Proposal developed and advocated for a "Certificate of Gender and Equity" requiring all sectors to integrate gender and equity in budgets

**Key impact in the long term:**

Certificate for Gender Equity approved by Parliament in 2015 as part of the Public Finance and Management Act (first country with such a certificate).

Village club model scaled up to more than 100 locations. Some clubs have become self-sufficient and continue to monitor public services and expenses. Some registered as community-based organizations or formed saving groups. Club members enjoy greater status as community leaders.



## MY IMPACT STORY

### ELIZABETH SAABA FROM KIBUKU DISTRICT

Elizabeth posing next to the placenta pit built in her community thanks to her leadership.  
Courtesy of the Forum for Women in Democracy

When the **Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)** used FGE support to launch its unique gender budgeting programme in five districts of Uganda, many didn't know what to expect. Elizabeth Saaba, a 51-year-old small-scale farmer from Kibuku, was immediately drawn to the idea, however. Setting up "village budget clubs" could give communities a say in local budgets – specifically women, often for the first time.

With training from FOWODE, the clubs began demonstrating how collective voice translated into impact. *"Before, I thought decision-making was only for men, (which) kept me at the level of the kitchen,"* says Elizabeth. *"I am now empowered to make decisions at family level and also on cross-cutting issues that affect communities in my district."*

Elisabeth's village budget club called attention to their community's lack of a maternity ward and placenta pit – two essential resources for women's health and safe waste management. After the club mobilized the community and presented these issues to local authorities, the district allocated funds for construction, and assigned two midwives to handle family care and maternal services. The number of women seeking maternal services each month increased an average of 74 per cent, while waste disposal management and hygiene at the health facility improved. Women felt their needs were seen—a sharp contrast from previous gender-blind budget processes.

***"I am now empowered to make decisions at family level and also on cross-cutting issues that affect communities in Kibuku district."***

As Elizabeth's experience grew, so did her confidence. She soon became a counsellor helping other local women with personal challenges. When she was elected as a local representative, she gained even greater influence on the local budget process. *"Attracting support from men was challenging,"* she acknowledges. Yet her reputation and community engagement meant she eventually succeeded.

Today, she chairs the District Women's Caucus, representing over 180,000 people, and extending the important work she started in the village budget club to the district level. Over 100 village budget clubs actively monitor public services and expenses, mobilizing citizens, and shaping the next round of women like Elizabeth to lead their communities to a better life.